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THEATRE ARTS MONTHLY

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VOLUME XIV JULY, 1930 NUMBER 7

SEVENTH ANNUAL TRIBUTARY THEATRE YEARBOOK

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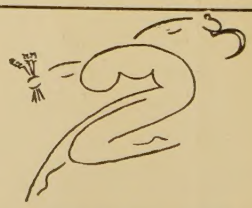

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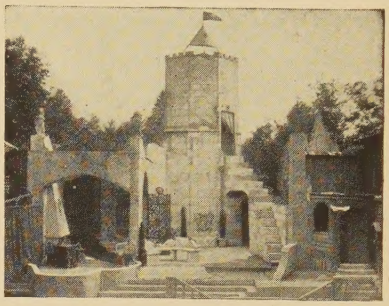

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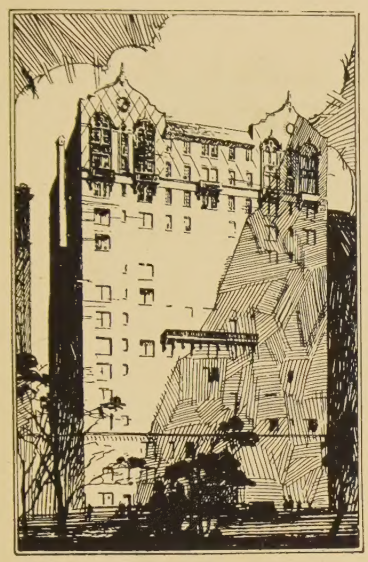

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HOLY NIGHT

From the Cornish School Theatre's production, in Seattle, of Sierra's drama, under the direction of Herbert V. Gellendre. (*Photograph by Kennell-Ellis*)

The WORLD and the THEATRE

In Dublin—Chicago's Art Theatre—Poet Laureate—The Greek Way

DUBLIN, for a short season, went strongly American in its smaller experimental theatres. An early play by Martin Flavin called *Children of the Moon,* translated into Gaelic by Leon O'Brionn, held the stage at the tiny Peacock Theatre. *Anna Christie* was a well-favored offering at the Dublin Gate and the response of enthusiastic silence received by a late production, Charles Rann Kennedy's *The Terrible Meek,* brings back to the memory of New York theatregoers an afternoon at Winthrop Ames' Little Theatre about fifteen years ago when the audience, largely professional, so completely capitulated to the quality of the play, its material and its acting, that they left the house without a word or a sound of applause. The play is a story of the crucifixion and while its theatric power depends somewhat on the surprise of the curtain which opens upon darkness and a sound of sorrow and gradually lifts upon the scene on Calvary, still the fact that the play found in a sensitive Catholic country the same eloquent, silent response, is a tribute to its play-making. The play was pro-

Signet, Dublin Gate Theatre

Meierhold and his theatre have just gone back to Russia after being the guests of Europe for a season. It is reported that this most dynamic figure in the Soviet theatre may come to America next year to fulfil a wish he is known to have held for a long time. Tairoff and his Kamerny Theatre have also been visiting in central Europe playing, among other things, two plays by Eugene O'Neill which are among the most popular successes in their repertory. *Desire Under the Elms* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings* must have looked strange under their French titles of *L'Amour sous les ormes* and *Tous les enfants du bon Dieu ont des ailes* to at least one member of their first-night audience at the Théâtre Pigalle, in Paris late in May—Eugene O'Neill.

•

London is having a series of plays in Esperanto with an Anglo-French cast. The third of these plays is Labiche and Martin's *La Poudre aux Yeux* in a translation made for the occasion by M. Paul le Brun.

Drama is one of the fine arts. The English courts have settled the matter. The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art recently asked to be exempt from certain taxes on the ground that they are an educational institution. The courts allowed that they could claim that right only if the drama were legally entitled to the claim of being one of the fine arts, and a decision has just been rendered in their favor to the great relief of all directors, actors, designers, playwrights, critics, and probably managers, et cetera, who are thus relieved of the taint of trade.

●

By way of returning the courtesy of the foreign theatres in France M. Paul Abram has gone on tour through the most important cities of central Europe with the company of the Odéon. The repertory is made up of three classic programs *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* and *Le Malade imaginaire; L'Avare* and *Les Precieuses ridicules; Le Misanthrope* and *Arlequin poli par amour;* and two plays from their modern list: *La double Passion* and *La Petite Chocolatière.*

●

Max Reinhardt celebrated, at the end of May, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his contract as director of the Deutsches Theater, the house which has been during all this time closely associated with his name and his spirit. Characteristically enough Reinhardt, given the choice of play for his anniversary celebration, chose a performance of Strauss's *Fledermaus.* In his earlier days Reinhardt was himself a very good actor and it is reported that he asked as a special favor to be allowed to take part again in this performance. All of the players now in Berlin who have at any time passed through the school of the Deutsches Theater joined in a playing festival as part of the celebration and since Reinhardt's pupils have included practically every German-speaking actor of any importance in this generation, the list must have been more or less like a theatrical Who's Who.

duced by Hilton Edwards, director of the Gate who, as leading player of *Anna Christie,* is reported to have given a remarkable study of Old Chris.

THOMAS WOOD STEVENS is leaving the Kenneth Sawyer Goodman Memorial Theatre in Chicago where he has served as director since the founding. There has been an open break in policy between Mr. Stevens and the directors of the Art Institute under whose auspices the theatre is run. The choice of plays seems to be the chief matter under discussion—whether the repertory should aim to approach in idea and in quality the plays produced in Chicago's Loop and addressed to the larger regular public for the theatre, or whether they should be plays addressed to a more special audience, some of them at least experimental in character. There is probably no city in the country more difficult to experiment in than Chicago. They can afford success there and they want it. As Charles Collins, dramatic critic of the Chicago *Tribune,* wrote in an article in THEATRE ARTS some months ago, Chicago's best citizens are perfectly willing to ride in automobiles made in Detroit if those automobiles happen to be the best automobiles, and they see no reason why they should not accept the plays made in New York if those are the successful plays. It is an attitude of mind which must be reckoned with by any theatre which wants to create its own audience and its own plays. Mr. Stevens is probably right in feeling that he is not the man to "pick winners" for the

A scene from George M. Cohan's amusing revival of the burlesque melodrama, The Tavern. *Joseph Allen as The Hired Man, and Mr. Cohan himself as the Vagabond.*

What does the Chicago Opera Company mean by being so silent about the productions of Gilbert and Sullivan given under its auspices at the Civic Theatre which lately housed Fritz Leiber and the Civic Shakespeare Company? One hears it whispered that *The Gondoliers* and *The Yeomen of the Guard* are there with the other favorites all to come, but surely Gilbert and Sullivan should not be announced in whispers.

•

Travellers in Austria should make a note of the fact that the wonderful Theatre Collection of the Nationalbibliothek has acquired an exhibition room of its own under the direction of Dr. Josef Gregor. The first exhibit in the new hall is dedicated to Hugo von Hofmannsthal and will open on the day that the Burgtheater gives the first performance of Hofmannsthals' *Oedipus* drama. In addition to the first collection, assembled as a memorial to the distinguished poet, the first exhibit will also include a collection of theatre models showing the progress of stage design from the 16th to the 20th century.

•

Wilfred's Clavilux was used to create the background in the recent performance of Ibsen's *The Vikings* on Broadway following the same use made of it as a setting for this play at the Goodman Theatre two years ago and at Robert Henderson's production at Ann Arbor the next summer. The General Electric Company have installed a form of light organ in the Chicago Opera House. Severance Hall, the fine new auditorium which Cleveland has built for its Symphony Orchestra directed by Nikolai Sokoloff, is to have still another variation of the instrument—a combination, it is said, of the Skinner pipe organ with a new lighting key board designed by the Westinghouse Company. Light, as Appia said, is gradually taking its place in the theatre as leading actor.

Art Institute. He does happen, however, to be one of the really creative pioneers in every branch of the Tributary Theatre—a playwright and critic, a fine director, an extraordinary teacher. Which makes the situation a pretty problem in the art of the theatre.

THE appointment of John Masefield as poet laureate of Great Britain has been a source of great satisfaction to all who believe in the cause of the poetic drama, in which Masefield has long been a happy warrior. The poet laureate has not only written many verse plays but he has established at his own home, Boar's Hill, Oxford, a garden-theatre dedicated to the speaking of dramatic verse. Here a year ago Gordon Bottomley's choric plays (*The Singing Sands, Towie Castle,* and *Ardvorlich's Wife)* had a first performance. In the Prologue to *The Singing Sands,* Mr. Bottomley writes:

"The power that is in man's utterance man
has lately forgot.
Thought has denied the part that sound
has in thought's shaping."

and continues in praise of Masefield:

"We and our kind have been homeless,
we have not known what to do
To bring to expression the impulses
hidden in us by our fathers,
Till a poet and master of power in his
power, in the hour and mood
Of creating, has seen a purpose for us: to
the Word he has hearkened.
The Word is in him for guide. It is the
living source
Of the old August celebration which is
despised and over:
We assemble here in its name, he has
unlocked and restored
This house of the Word for us, new and
yet not other."

A Japanese Little Theatre, the Shin Tsukiji, produces Maxim Gorky's *Mother* at the Imperial Theatre, Tokio. The play was adapted by Tamutsu Takada and directed by Yoshi Hidikata. The scenes were designed by Kenkichi Yoshida.

Three successful realistic settings. Above: John Masefield's *The Witch* as produced by the Kanawha Players of Charleston, W. Va., Ramon Savich, director. Center: Stanford University's production of Clemence Dane's *Granite*, directed by Harold Helvenston. Below: Valentine P. Newmark's set for the production of Sutton Vane's *Outward Bound*, Little Theatre of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Mr. Masefield's appointment augurs well for the future of ". . . Sound enriched by the texture of speech and governed by ordered rhythm of speech to music turning."

MR. BASIL DEAN should know whether George Bernard Shaw has or has not given Associated Radio Pictures the right to reproduce Shaw's plays in the talking films with Dean as director. And Mr. Dean says he has not, the newspapers to the contrary notwithstanding. It is to be hoped that he may, for the glitter of Shaw's dialogue, his way of massing an idea in words against the background of his characters, and his objective handling of his audience seem to be the best possible dramatic material for films. Whatever talk can add to the screen, Shaw's plays would be sure to add. They would be a good measuring rod.

IT may be something more than chance that brought Edith Hamilton's extraordinarily fine, sensitive, readable book, *The Greek Way* [W. W. Norton, N. Y.] from the press at almost the same moment that *Lysistrata* arrived in Philadelphia on its way to New York.

"There is a connection," Miss Hamilton says, in the gay and penetrating chapter on Comedy and Aristophanes, "between the sublime and the ridiculous. Aristophanes' comedy and, pre-eminently Shakespeare's comedy, and theirs alone, has a kinship with tragedy. The audiences to whose capacity for heightened emotion *Lear* and the *Oedipus Rex* were

Albert Carroll, who for several years was one of the most amusing performers of the Grand Street Follies, now appears in the gayest of the Garrick Gaieties. Aline Fruhauf caricatures him above in his burlesque of Mei Lan Fang, *Strictly Honorable*.

•

Rudolf von Laban, the leader of German dance modernism, has been appointed to the post of ballet master at the Staats Theater in Berlin.

The second International Marionette Congress will be held in Liege, Belgium, in September and is expected to offer a more than representative assemblage of famous marionette theatres from all over Europe and probably guests from America. Besides a series of productions the program will include conferences on the making and handling of marionettes, the construction of their theatres, plays especially suited to them and the use of marionettes in modern education.

•

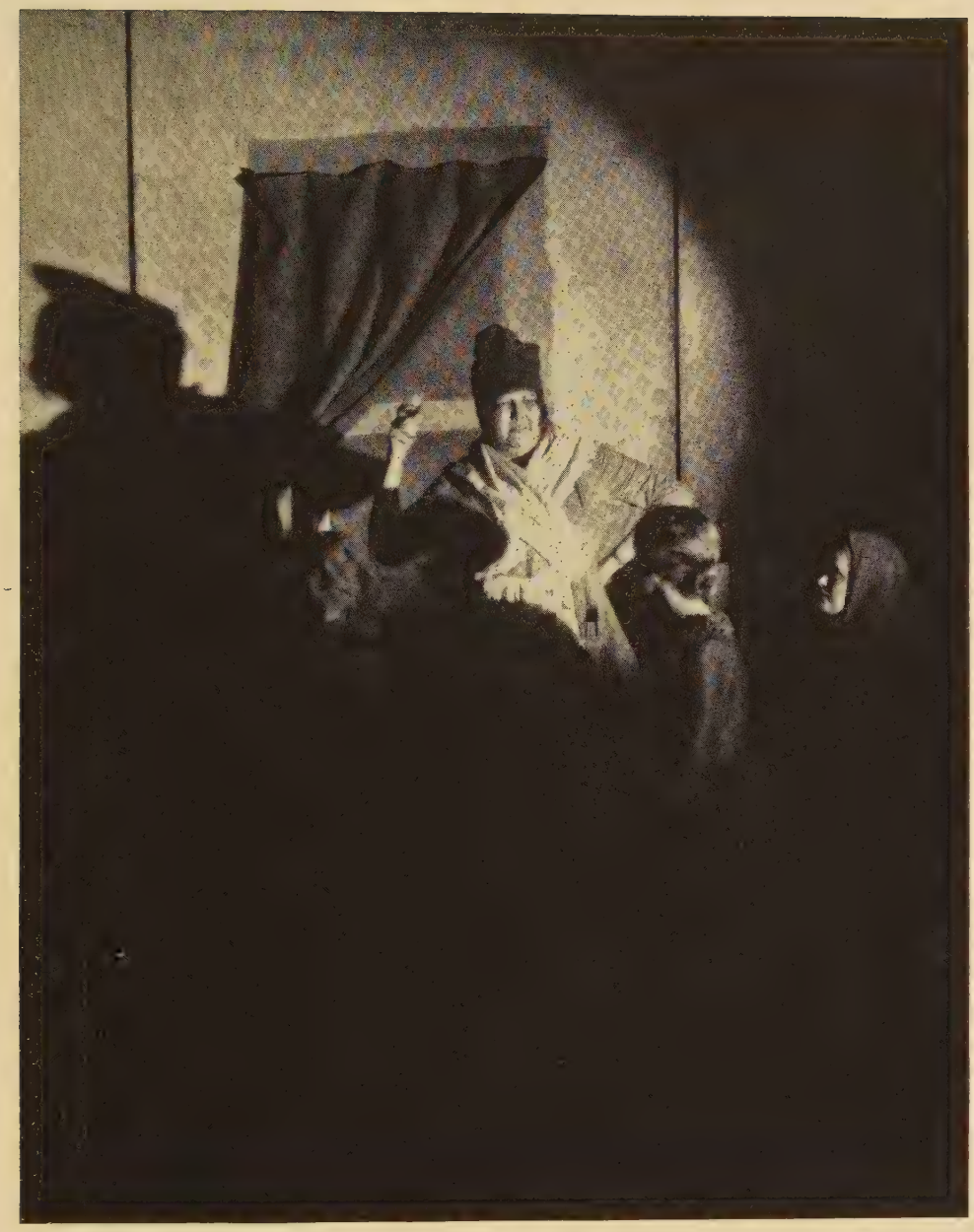
For many years the Theatre Guild has been the keeper of the tradition of a subscription audience for the professional theatre. The Guild's desire to carry its message to the world outside New York, however, seems to have led, ironically enough, to its losing a leaf out of its notebook where its arch-enemies (and best pupils), the Shuberts, might find it. The latter, advancing no such highly idealistic claims as those of the Guild, have this year organized subscription audiences in several cities with great success and are announcing such organizations for next season in Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Rumor says that one of these organizations already has in the bank $27,000 in cash toward next year's subscription season. Chicago's play season for next year, incidentally, will probably be headed by Arthur Wing Pinero's *Dr. Harmer's Holiday.*

•

The German Dance Congress, announced to take place from the 19th to the 26th of June, in Munich, will have a series of lectures and discussions beside the dance programs of soloists and groups which are to illustrate modern tendencies in great variety. Among the subjects to be emphasized in discussion are the Dance as an Art Form, Dance and the Community, the Lay Dance in its Educational Aspects, the Dance in its Social Relationships.

addressed, were the same that delighted in Falstaff and in Aristophanes' maddest nonsense, and when an age succeeded, in no wise less keen intellectually, but of thinner emotions, great comedy as well as great tragedy departed." And again she says, "To read Aristophanes is in some sort like reading an Athenian comic paper. All the life of Athens is there: the politics of the day and the politicians; the war party and the anti-war party; pacifism, votes for women, free trade, fiscal reform, complaining tax payers, educational theories, the current religious and literary talk—everything, in short, that interested the average citizen. All was food for his mockery. He was the speaking picture of the follies and foibles of his day." To which, seeing *Lysistrata,* we may add—"he was the speaking picture of the follies and foibles of every day, which remain in their essence eternally the same."

Program signet for Andreyev's The Beautiful Sabine Women *at The Playhouse of the Y. M. and W. H. A. of Pittsburgh, Pa.*



Stokes McCune's original play of the French Revolution, *A Toast That We Can Drink,* produced by the Players Club of Columbus, Ohio, under the direction of Mr. McCune.

The Gardener's Dog by Lope de Vega, presented by the Dramatic Department of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, under the direction of Boris Glagolin. Settings designed by Frank Stout.

Two scenes from the Dartmouth College production of *Journey's End* under the direction of Warner Bentley, an early amateur performance of R. C. Sherriff's war play. (*Photographs by White*)

TOWIE CASTLE

A scene from Gordon Bottomley's poetic ghost-play, *Towie Castle,* as produced during the Boar's Hill Festival at John Masefield's Theatre, Oxford, England. (*Photograph by Pollard Crowther*)

THE LONDON SCENE

War and Peace Plays

By Ashley Dukes

NEW war plays arrive to prove our point of several months ago, that war realism is dead as far as the theatre goes, and war plays of personal experience have nothing more to say to us. Patrick Macgill's *Suspense* tries to give the spectator the feeling that he is sitting in a dug-out above a mine which may explode at any moment. A stationary and foul-mouthed conversation among a half-platoon of soldiers is meant to help the illusion. There are strong moments in this dug-out, but the effect of the whole is very tedious. We yawn recalling tiresome paragraphs to the effect that the author or the producer or the actors or all of them once passed through such an experience, or at least found themselves in such a situation. What on earth that has to do with theatre or art is not explained. We doze off altogether, and wake up wondering if the mine has meanwhile exploded. Not at all, but something better has happened. The author has given up his drama of suspense and begun to write a new play. His soldiers have come out of their dug-out and think they are going back to the safety of billets. They sit down for a halt on the way, and are chatting as foul-mouthedly as ever when, bang, arrive the shells among them, and up goes the mine "off" stage at a distance, and they are ordered to turn right about and repel an attack, in which the foremost are killed forthwith.

Of course, that catastrophe is not at all beyond the bounds of personal experience, but there is enough dramatic style about it to make a good *peripetia* or *dénouement* in the Greek sense. Life itself approximates to art when it is so expressively surprising. And Reginald Denham, the director of the scene, contrives to stage a thrill in three minutes that two hours of suspense could not give us. What is much rarer, he manages to convince us that this sort of well-drilled fight still has a place in the theatre, and that it can be done better by the stage than by the film.

I for one do not believe this in my calmer moments, but the third

act of *Suspense* decidedly scores a point for sensational stagecraft, and points for good character acting are scored on every side. The license of language which has been objected to is not really license at all, for I think Patrick Macgill is only writing his natural idiom. He makes no pretense that it is poetic speech, but neither does he record it as the racy dialogue of Cockneys or peasants or any other kind of out-of-the-way beings. It is the ordinary parlance of the sort of men he understands, and so he speaks it without affectation. It is a pity that a man so simple-minded as this should be made a conventional realist by force of circumstances. If he had never seen a play of personal experience, if he had never fallen into the hands of an excellent director and excellent character actors, he might have produced something essentially more interesting and vital than *Suspense*. Their experience added to his own tends to rub off the bloom of freshness from the tale. But if we admit that the drama of realistic experience can take a variety of forms, this particular variety has many merits.

The experience of Commander King-Hall, author of *B. J. One*, is much more sophisticated. He is at pains to convince us in the ordinary stage fashion that we are present (a) in the Board Room of the British Admiralty, (b) on the bridge of a light cruiser during the Battle of Jutland, and (c) in the offices of a Steel Cartel or trust in the post-war period. He knows enough about all these scenes and their characters to produce a play of sorts. The detail is capital—or it would be capital if the author ever understood how tiresome detail can be. (Not until this understanding is gained can any one afford detail in drama.) The theatre is full of well-scrubbed young officers bringing their womenfolk to see how admirably the thing is done, which means how exactly every button or stripe is in the right place, and how cleverly the sound of rushing water is counterfeited, if such a detail is still of interest to young officers of the King's Navee. And there we are back again at one step in the bad old days when it was considered astonishing to see a real donkey on the stage of His Majesty's or a real thoroughbred on the stage of Drury Lane, not to say a real gentleman on the stage of the St. James's. The Jutland scene of *B. J. One* is tremendously effective in the visual sense, if you once admit the effect to be worth making. The cruiser comes at you through the darkness and foam, the seagulls scream around her masts, the impartial shells of friend or foe scream on to her decks, the boat-

swain somewhere is always calling out "Aye, aye, sir"—and the upshot is that we don't believe a word of it because everybody says "Aye, aye, sir," or words to some such inarticulate effect, instead of bursting into forty lines of blank verse or some other intelligible form of speech, intelligible, that is to say, in the sense of fitting to a great occasion. But bless you, these stupid braided gentlemen who stand on the bridge with their telescopes and glasses cannot utter one sentence of good dramatic speech, much less a tirade or a soliloquy; and so the scene insists on its visual merits alone, insists on being taken for a splendid imitation of the real thing, with everybody "doing his job" for dear life in a murderous half-hour of actuality.

Frankly that spells suicide for the theatre. For everybody knows (at least everybody with his wits about him) that the talk-film can produce that actual effect much better than the stage; or if it cannot produce the effect to-day, it will produce it to-morrow or to-morrow week. A real ship will be there on the photographic screen, and real water will rush past, and the screams of real seagulls can easily be recorded; and for all we know real captains and admirals may be commissioned by the film company with full Government approval in order that dusky subjects at the ends of the earth may be favourably impressed by the militant virtues of the white race. And in the end, when everybody has been taken off it, that real ship will be sunk by real shells. And every one will say how marvellous is the realism achieved by that film director. But we, who know that the aim of the theatre is to be theatrical and not to be real, refuse to be imposed upon by such stuff as this Jutland battle of *B. J. One*. It is labour wasted, in any theatrical sense.

Yet the play tries hard, it is thoughtful and genuine in its way, and it ends with a very courageous piece of discussion drama, intended to show us how many are the bonds of interest that unite nations, and how unimportant comparatively are the disruptive influences of war. This discussion does not arise directly from the action of the play, it does not even directly illustrate anything that has happened. It is completely "in the air," yet so admirably ambitious to say something worth saying that it must be granted an effect of its own. Like *Journey's End*, this was a Maurice Browne production; and as in *Journey's End*, the cast were all men.

The piece called *Down Our Street* was given months ago by the

Stage Society under the name of *Belle,* or *What's the Bother?* Its author, Ernest George, is an East End bookseller; and his play had a good press on the questionable ground that it was concerned with life as the dramatist knew it rather than life as he imagined it to be. This meant, of course, that the critics were relieved to see new types on the stage instead of the monotonous old types they see night after night. They were also relieved to hear a good honest dialect, even the Cockney dialect which is detestable in its vowel sounds, instead of the common characterless stuff of stage conversation. This tale of the courtship or walking-out of a barber's daughter shows a real gift for presentation and a sharp ear for the harmonies of natural speech. Except for an occasional stop to sentimentalize character, it would run on in much the same vital inconsequent fashion as an O'Casey play at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. The weakness lies in its being played by West End instead of East End actors. Milton Rosmer directs it with a sensitive hand, and Nancy Price and Morris Harvey most honorably avoid making the easy effects of character acting that the West End audience by habit expects. Maisie Darrell is fresh in her approach to the heroine Belle, and, in short, all the company are loyally resolved to serve the interest of the play; yet we feel, nevertheless, that it would be more alive if it were cast from passersby in the Mile End Road, rather than from professional players in the Strand whose artistic conscience is always admirably restraining them from over-acting.

One day an East End troupe will walk into the West End with such a piece and make the same impression that the Irish players made when first they came to London. At any rate, that is what should happen, and Ernest George should be the playwright for their money. But for the present the West End stage still looks upon East-enders as it looks upon other suburbans; and that means treating them artistically as stuff for character acting alone. It has not yet begun to decentralize itself intellectually, and when theatres at Hampstead of Kew produce plays about East-enders or suburbans, they nearly always take the West End point of view. It is uncommon hard to convince a Londoner that he lives in one of an agglomeration of strange villages, each deserving to be studied for its own sake and not for its relation to its neighbour.

Shakespeare's birthday week brought the seasonal opening of the Stratford festival, and the appearance of two Hamlets in London,

Henry Ainley at the Haymarket and John Gielgud at the Old Vic. To my great regret I missed seeing Ainley's Hamlet, which is to be repeated, however, at a Command performance with very much the same "all-star" cast. At the Old Vic *Hamlet* was given in its entirety, which meant that until the end of the Players' Scene there were few expansions of the usual stage version, but afterwards the play began to meander through quite unfamiliar and barren passages for the King, Laertes and Osric, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But to the Old Vic audience, vibrant with response to Shakespeare as no other audience can be, every line might have been formed by the same breath of inspiration. These five hours in the playhouse are no pious ceremony, but an enthralling experience that comes once a year for certain. John Gielgud's Hamlet has many merits, not the least of which, theatrically speaking, is a frank democratic sympathy between player and spectator. So might a talented apprentice have played Hamlet on Bankside, interpreting poetry in terms of common understanding and again common understanding in terms of poetry. But if he is boyish and direct, this Hamlet has all the passion needful. Perhaps he has not all the humour that goes to the making of a great tragic conception. We ought to laugh oftener with this man, even though we laugh bitterly. But in order to laugh with Hamlet at the world's emptiness we must see another Polonius, not the fussy dotard who is presented at the Old Vic, but a man of pomp and circumstance; a full round phrase-maker, an emblem of all that is most respectable and respected in the outer life of man. And perhaps we should see another King, more malicious than the Elizabethan gentleman who is beautifully played in his own fashion by Donald Wolfit. Alas, they are all bound to play for sympathy too much, if their director will let them. Their human nature will out. But in a great composition like this of *Hamlet* it is a commonplace to say that each interpretation of character depends on another, and together they form the balance of the whole. The direction of Harcourt Williams is always thoughtful, and considering his human material he contrives to make a fine harmony of the play, never forgetting that the whole is sombre background for one bright spirit, who by common consent must stand alone.

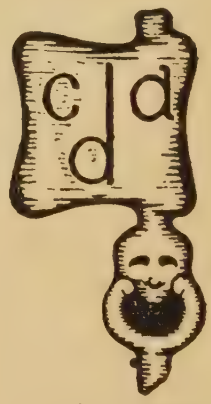
So the yearly rite of spring is accomplished; one has seen *Hamlet* again. That in itself gives a sense of renewal; the theatre re-awakens to life and meaning.

Vassar College

Ohio University Playshop

New Mexico Normal University

A signet from England



Carolina Dramatic Association

Ohio Alpha chapter of Theta Alpha Phi

Lobero Theatre, Santa Barbara, California

Whitcomb Players, Portland, Oregon

TRIBUTARY THEATRE PROGRAM SIGNETS

NATIONAL PLAY TOURNAMENT

The Little Theatre in Review

By CARL CARMER

IT is a difficult thing to form a sane judgment on the productions of the recent Little Theatre tournaments held in New York. What with the newspaper critics displaying uncompromising attitudes toward the "arty" on the one hand, and on the other the more radical members of the amateur theatres themselves declaring that American drama's only hope lies in the future of the Little Theatre—it is hard to remain unsullied by prejudice of one sort or another.

This season's was the Eighth Annual One-Act Play Tournament. Former winners of the Belasco Cup were from theatres which are now among the best-known and most firmly established of the amateur group, and generally speaking, the winning plays were either already well-known, or original plays which have since become popular. The two British prize winning groups, for example, The Welwyn Garden City Theatre Society and The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Players Club carried off honors with *Mr. Sampson,* by Charles Lee, and *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals,* by Sir J. M. Barrie. The Little Theatre at Dallas won the cup three years in succession with three original plays, J. W. Rogers' *Judge Lynch,* Paul Green's *The No 'Count Boy* and Margaret Larkins' *El Cristo.* The theatres which produced the best one-act plays in the early years have for the most part moved on to three-act performances now. They have proved themselves capable of holding their audiences throughout full-length plays and the audiences have preferred them.

The result of this has been that the one-act play companies who now appear in the Belasco Cup tournament are mostly from groups who are passing through the same stages of aspiration and struggle as did the better established Little Theatres a few years ago. The one-act play provides a training school for them which will eventually prepare them, too, for more sustained flights. Not that the one-act is not a complete form in itself and well worth production.

It is less ambitious and less popular than the three-act, however, and is therefore used by most theatre companies as a way station on the road to longer productions. Unless regional elimination tournaments or some like schemes are used to select from districts both the best plays and the best players, one-act play productions must continue to remain exercises preliminary to more advanced work.

As for the three-act play tournament for the thousand-dollar Samuel French award and the Theatre Arts Monthly cup—this is its first year. It is astonishing that it was realized at all, considering the difficulties that lay in its way. It was announced late in the season, conditions were that each play entered must be original and unpublished, and expense prohibited many companies at a distance from coming to New York. Moreover, the more progressive theatres have found, as they moved into the larger field that the supply of original plays of full-length is much less than that of the one-acts. The local amateur playwright has not kept up with the local amateur producers and actors on what is obviously a longer road for him. And so these theatres have been obliged to confine their efforts in large measure to well-known plays. As might have been expected, therefore, three of the contestants were Manhattan groups. The other two, one from Chicago and the other from St. Louis, are not yet thought of as belonging to the number of the strongly organized, successful amateur theatres. None of the latter, for good and sufficient reasons (one of which was a lack of a reasonably good play) was entered in the tournament.

This introduction is not in the nature of an apology for the work of the contesting theatres. None is necessary. It is merely an explanation of the attendant situation and a preamble to the method of this criticism, whose intention is simply to point out some of the better things which the tournaments brought to light, original contributions or approaches made by the amateurs to something like professional standards of acting, playwriting, direction, et cetera. The amateur theatres must know that a full realization of their purposes, no matter how earnest and idealistic, will require a long period of their best endeavor. It is not the purpose of this article to pat the Little Theatres on the back. Most of them are already conscious of too much flattery at home and desire unprejudiced criticism based on other than local criteria, an appraisal of their work in intention and in achievement, according to a common standard.

Kith and Kin, by Wallace A. Manheimer, produced by the

Thalian Masquers of the Bronx Y. M. H. A., was the first play of the Theatre Arts Cup Match to arouse much interest. This was partially due to the material of the play itself, for the author had made a conscientious effort to write a distinctively American out-of-the-soil drama. His characters were of an Adirondack Mountain community, his plot the well-worn story of lovers who must conquer parental objections. The second act, showing a barn dance in full swing, was seasoned with interesting and colorful folk custom. The play had good stuff in it and it was not a bad start toward something that will some day be of importance to native American drama. John H. Brown as the hot-headed dreamer, Orrin Codner, built up a strong character. His work was sure and aggressive. Among the more able of his supporters were Dorothy Fowler Gillam as Ma Codner and Sol Berlad as Parson Biggs. Philip Gross who directed the play was particularly successful in the timing of the speeches and the building up of minor climaxes.

The winners of the tournament, The Morningside Players of Columbia University, presented *The New Freedom,* by Marjorie Bartholomew Paradis, on the third night of the tournament. It was at once noticeable that here were players working in a field they knew. They and Miss Paradis had well observed "the young married crowd" in American country clubs. The story of the gradual dissolution of the ties that bound a young couple together, through the husband's effort to "keep up" with his friends, was familiar and pathetic. The dialogue was uncompromisingly true and a welcome relief from those impossibly humorous, wise-cracking conversations with which better-known playwrights than Miss Paradis are depicting our country club members on the professional stage. Elizabeth Von Nardroff played the wife with restraint and sincerity. Her Zoe Bainbridge remains a very real person. John Cocks as the husband—Grover Bainbridge—threw artifice to the winds with surprisingly successful results. His was a downright blunt portrayal which captured immediate acceptance of the rôle. The minor characters of the play, too often badly done by amateurs, were played with professional competence. Especially deserving of mention were May Wolmark's amusing portrayal of a nurse and the work of Clayton J. Heermance, Jr., as Doctor Davis. This reviewer, who has sat through most of the current season's commercial efforts, joins the critic for the New York *Times* in suggesting a professional production of this play in New York. It is considerably

above the average in thought and skill, well worth the experiment.

Proximity to the living theatre, to the best that the New York stage can offer, may well have had a beneficial influence on this playwright and these players. Their instructor at Columbia University, Hatcher Hughes, graduate of the Little Theatre movement, and Pulitzer drama prize winner, has, no doubt, been able to make them feel that influence. Many of the amateur groups of this country, however, provide the only theatre which their communities see. Without the opportunities for either comparison or emulation their task is to create a living theatre of their own in which their playwrights and players may exercise their talents. This is a possibility, but it offers more desperately difficult problems than many metropolitan critics realize.

Flying Blind, by Mary Aldis, produced by The Lake Forest Players and The Playwrights Theatre of Chicago, was an earnest propagandistic play which contained some exciting passages, good short situations built up by sturdy dialogue. Helen Walton made a difficult leading part fairly plausible. Edward H. Pasmore and Evelyn Pasmore as Henry and Caroline Tillinghast made two minor rôles more convincing. But acting honors went to Harry Dickson and Frances Acher as the little George and littler Dorothy. Indeed, these latter two, quite small children themselves, played with a certainty and lack of self-consciousness that their elders might well envy.

The last play of the series was *The Twelfth Disciple,* by Mary Parmly Koues Sachs, produced by The Little Theatre of St. Louis. A blank verse tragedy in three acts, it ingeniously attempted to clear Judas of the infamy of betrayal. Some passages were true and sounding poetry and, for the most part, the cast spoke it well. Charles Dillon, as Judas, gave a memorable performance. He has a rich full voice and he used it with rare intelligence and feeling. The settings, from designs by F. Ray Leimkuehler, were pleasantly pictorial. This was the most ambitious undertaking of the tournament—the rendering of a blank verse tragedy laid in a distant period. It was a far cry from the cocktails and golf of the winning play, and a much more difficult task. That it was able to reach second place is evidence of the capable interpretation given it by the St. Louis Players, under the painstaking direction of Frederick Kitson Cowley.

The first play of the one-act play tournament was produced by

Three original plays. Above: *It Could Have Happened* by Robert Scribner, designed, costumed and produced by Central High School Players Bridgeport, Conn., director, Julia C. Farnam. (*Photograph by Crown Studios*) Center: James Wood's *Death Valley Scottie,* directed by Frederick H. Koch, Carolina Playmakers. (*Photograph by Wooten-Moulton*) Below: Arthur M. Hinkley's *The Joiners,* Play Production Department of the University of Michigan, Valentine B. Windt, director.

THE TOWN CLUB

PLAYERS

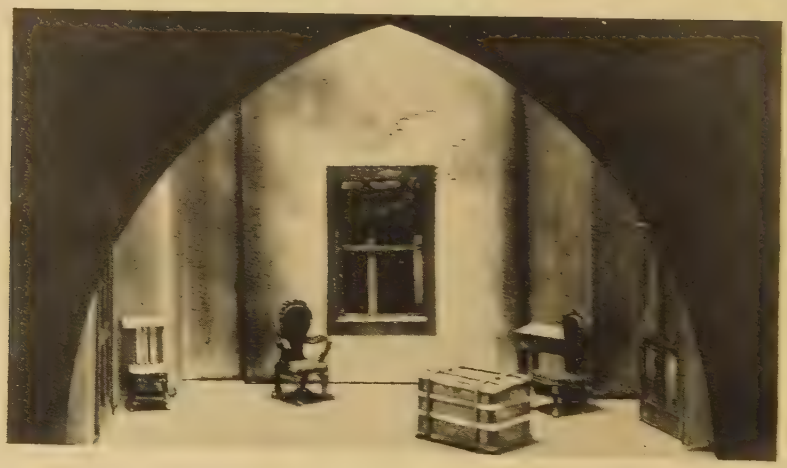
OF

NEW YORK

SHOW

A UNIT SET

IN THREE MOODS



Models by Henrietta Kiper Moss for scenes in the Maugham, O'Neill, and Benelli manners.

The Make-Up Box Players of Hunter College. *The Gods Are Wise*, by Bryna Rachel Isaacs, was academically interesting in its treatment of Anglo-Saxon fatalism, its theme the *wyrd* which our Norse ancestors found the governing force of life. In it lies the source of many plays yet to be written. The author, as the little prince Gerult, was alternately amusing and appealing in a minor part. In the early quieter passages of the play Jeannette Dubin as Queen Hildeburh displayed a pleasing voice and manner. She was lovely to look upon and she moved in dignity.

The high spot of the first evening, however, was the production by the Playhouse of the Henry Street Settlement of Richard Hughes' *The Sisters' Tragedy*. This performance richly deserved the honorable mention for acting later given it by the judges. The play itself is a one-act tragedy of gloom and horror of the sort that Little Theatres have found easier to perform than comedies. Ruth Harmonitz as Lowrie the thirteen-year-old girl who sends her half-wit brother to his death to relieve his sufferings and lighten the family burdens, gave a convincing and sympathetic performance. There was pathos in her work and a disciplined reserve, a quality found all too seldom in amateurs. She even overcame a rather long and emotional soliloquy. The rest of the company gave her natural and well-proportioned support.

The second night of the match saw four plays, each of which had qualities to recommend it. Philip Johnson's *Legend*, (presented by the Staten Island Little Theatre) another type tragedy, was raised above the average by the acting of Eva Meyer as Mrs. Reed, the half-mad woman who waits for her sailor husband and her sailor son. The make-up of this character was unusually good, the voice and inflections admirably simulated. *Barring the Barriers*, by Benjamin Feiner Jr., presented by the Women's Town Club of New York, held an amusing idea—the satirical presentation of a single situation as Somerset Maugham, Eugene O'Neill or Sam Benelli might handle it. The unit set designed by Hermena Kiper Moss (see page 562) was ingeniously varied, and the scene in the American manner was effectively acted.

Maxine Finsterwald's *Seven Against One*, winning the Samuel French first award for original plays, was highly imaginative in conception and given adequate production by the Associate Players Stock Company of the 92nd Street Y. M. H. A. It was the nearest to experimental theatre the tournament provided. For in

plot it enters the field of the psychic, showing the assassination of a tyrannic and prophetic dictator through the thought-power of seven imprisoned priests, all brothers. The stage held two scenes, lighted alternately until the last passage when both showed action occurring simultaneously in widely separated places. The secret meeting of Vagan's cabinet was admirably handled, skilfully preparing for the entrance of the half-mad dictator—and the prison scene with its seven brother-priests seated in a circle of light was eerily impressive. Both Myron E. Sattler, who directed the production, and Lionel-Gersten Field, who arranged the settings, handled their problems well. This should be a very popular play for all-male casts—it is a distinctive contribution to the one-act play field.

The Road to Rio, written by Joseph R. Fleisler, and produced by the Sunnyside (Long Island) Playhouse, was given a realistic and skilful performance. The first half of the play, before it died in the leading lady's long monologue, was admirably directed—the characterization was surely done, the dialogue well timed. It achieved an atmosphere not unlike that of *The Front Page, Night Stick,* and other recent plays of newspaper, detective and gangster life.

The third night held two exceptional high-lights, the acting of Barbara Bruce Tappan in Claire Kummer's *So's Your Old Antique,* produced by The Salon Players of Jackson Heights, Long Island, and an innovation presented by the Gardens Players of Forest Hills —a one-act operetta, *Rogues and Vagabonds,* elaborately set and colorfully costumed, better in idea than achievement.

The last night of the tournament, (omitting for the moment the fourth and most effective), saw the Paravent Players of Providence, Rhode Island, in their performance of Ferenc Molnar's *Marshal,* a smoothly timed, adequately designed production, in which the direction of Rosalba de Anchoriz Joy and the acting of Pearle Winburg as the Baron's wife were the best features.

The Loyola Community Theatre of Chicago very ably presented a one-act version of Lula Vollmer's *Sun-Up.* Genevieve Ryan, as Widow Cagle, gave that well-known part a strongly moving performance—one of the best characterizations in the tournament.

The last play of the contest, *Eyes,* by Maxine Block, was one of its most distinctive. The Morse Players, sponsored by the St. Louis Art League, gave it a competent cast who made its tragedy convincing. It was a truly and pitilessly observed study of a phase of

American life. Alice Gray Galleher and Eugene R. Wood as the shop-girl, Esther, and her cheap lover, played it skilfully and with a relentless realism. Therese Marie Wittler, as the grandmother, was well made up and played a difficult part with understanding.

The fourth night held much of interest even in its least effective play, *The Right of Possession,* by Edna Warren, which gave opportunity to several members of The Little Theatre of St. Louis to display considerable talent. Frank Bacon and Percy Ramsey were good as the opposing attorneys; Adelaide Kalkman, Leianna Devlin and Ralph Friedman contributed excellent character bits.

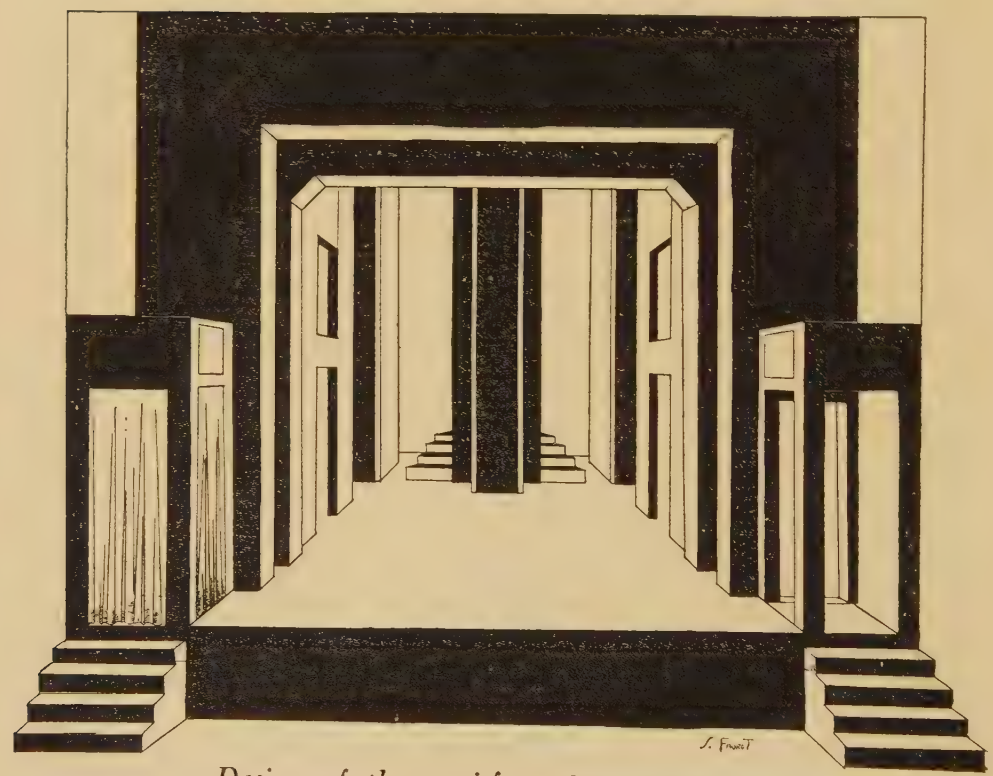
The Wayne Community Players of Goldsboro, North Carolina, came north with W. Allen Royall's *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder,* the first play of the tournament that was actually a "community play" in the sense that Professor Koch and his North Carolina Playmakers have interpreted the phrase to their state. Its scene was "ten miles west of Goldsboro" and all its characters were quite obviously drawn from observation of North Carolina rural types. The first scene was skilfully written, creating fine suspense, and effectively acted. Whiz Smith was well-cast as Junior, the small boy of the play, and Janie Burns created the first truly-drawn Southern flapper on a New York stage (despite the claims of *Coquette* and *Strictly Dishonorable*).

The Albany Players of Albany, New York, followed this production with a romantic tragedy laid in the castle of the Duke of Perigord, near Orleans, on a Spring evening of the early eleventh century. Few who saw it will forget the stage picture provided by Dorothy Lathrop and Paul M. Hewlett. The crimsons of the great tapestry on the back wall were echoed in the pastel costumes of the two sisters. These colors and the green of the Duke's robe, the gold of the sisters' hair, against the grey of the pillared hall made a changing spectacle that was full of beauty. Its creators deserve the opportunity to design more ambitious productions. The professional theatre would do well to consider them.

Anatole France's *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* was given a spirited production by the winners of the Belasco Cup, The Studio Theatre Players of Buffalo. In an amusingly whimsical setting the players moved in eccentric rhythms, sometimes accompanied by music. The costumes were gaily variegated, the grimaces and gestures of the players laden with laughter-provoking buffoonery, the pace of the direction swift and sure. It was without doubt

the best balanced production of the tournament. Jane Keeler, director, did a very good job of it. So did Ethel O'Dea Meyer as Catherine, the wife, Spencer Whedon as Master Leonard Botal, the judge, and the other members of the cast.

What the tournaments accomplished is a matter of opinion. That they were worth attempting would seem to have been proved. There were efforts not without power, and in the right direction. It is not a vain prophecy that succeeding years will see a development that will accomplish much for the American theatre.



Design of the semi-formal stage of the Cornish School Theatre, Seattle, Washington. All the units are movable and adjustable. Steps, in the center, rear; before them a twenty foot panel; on either side twenty foot screens; next to these (down stage) pylons. Penthouses are shown on either side in front of the proscenium arch.

DRURY LANE FOR A NIGHT

By KATHERINE MONAGHAN

THE languishing belles and splendid beaux of the eighteenth century were lured from Pall Mall, from their boating parties on the Thames, from all the conventional pursuits and amusements of persons of fashion by the announcement in 1751, that Charles Macklin, actor, dramatist, and manager of Drury Lane, had opened a school of elocution. Eagerly they flocked to him for instruction, and so great was his inspiration, so excellent his teaching, that they soon considered themselves highly proficient. In order that the world might become aware of their newly acquired abilities, they planned a public performance at Drury Lane Theatre. Never before in England had persons of such social distinction acted upon a public stage. Disdaining the narrow range of the popular dramas, and, perhaps, remembering Garrick's prologue spoken at the opening of Drury Lane in 1750,

"Sacred to Shakespeare, was this spot designed
To pierce the heart, and humanize the mind,"

they chose *Othello* for their first production.

London society awaited this unusual event with great excitement—it was much discussed in the drawing rooms as well as in the Coffee Houses. Drury Lane was taken over for one night, and only a thousand tickets were issued. Kirkman, an eighteenth century biographer, states that at least "twenty thousand people desired to see the production." The world of fashion swarmed to the theatre on the night of the performance. Lord Oxford in his *Memoirs* says that although the Naturalization Bill was set for the same date, "the House adjourned to attend at Drury Lane." Traffic was so congested that men and women had to leave their sedan chairs and coaches, and wade through the mud and dust, greatly to the amusement and delight of a route of pickpockets who expected to reap their share of this night's gaiety in a more material way. Lords and ladies were forced to seek refuge from the milling crowds in the public houses nearby, which had never before received noble patrons.

The theatre was illuminated by wax-lights; the "band of music

was a very fine one." In the stage box were the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the Royal Family; "stars and garters glittered for the first and last time in the upper galleries, and diamonds and embroidery shone from every corner of the house." Equally effective was the production itself—no expense had been spared—and the "scenes were proper as well as beautiful, the dresses not only magnificent, but well-fancied and adapted to the characters. Othello's was a robe in the fashion of his country; Roderigo's an elegant modern suit, and Cassio's and Iago's rich uniforms."

But the triumph of the evening was the performance; the excellence of the acting "not only delighted but astonished everyone." "There was a force," says Kirkman, "that no theatrical piece acted upon a private stage ever came up to." He adds also that Sir Francis Delaval's interpretation of Othello rivaled, and in many ways surpassed, that of any other actor upon the London stage—a criticism worthy of note, as Garrick was the idol of the times. "His embracing Desdemona on their meeting in Cyprus, set many a fair breast in the audience palpitating. His manner of throwing his arms about her, and the jocund expression of his countenance at that instant, afforded the spectators a fine picture of Cowley's embrace—

'Like the kind ocean I will be,
With love's soft arms ever surrounding thee'."

Mrs. Quon was a modest, lovely Desdemona. "The native candour and honesty in her face charmed the audience." The elocution was natural, easy, and free from the "mouthing, cant, and whining so often hackneyed upon the stage." Macklin, whose Shylock a few years previously had called forth that famous couplet

"This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew"

seemed to have infused his pupils with his own understanding of the Stratford bard. Both the audience and critics felt that the characters not only looked but acted as the Poet dreamed they should. One report of the performance concludes, "Mr. Macklin got great honour and deservedly, by his pupils on this occasion."

This production of *Othello* has a strangely modern ring. Here is a prototype of the contemporary "Little Theatre," the more remarkable since the eighteenth century was ruled unconsciously by the dictum of Pope, "Be not the first by whom the new is tried." The adventurous spirit of Macklin and his pupils well merited the distinction achieved by their performance.

An unusual action photograph from the Cornish School Theatre's production at Seattle of Sierra's *Holy Night*, under the direction of Herbert V. Gellendre. (*Photograph by Kennell-Ellis*)

WAPPIN' WHARF

Wappin' Wharf, by Charles S. Brooks, continues to be very popular with Little Theatre groups. The upper picture shows a scene from that play as produced at Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, under the direction of A. L. Mortensen; the lower, a production by the Players Club, University of Colorado, directed by E. J. West.

THE SABINE WOMEN

Leonid Andreyev's *The Sabine Women,* presented by the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association of Pittsburgh, under the direction of Martin Browne.

Pirandello's *Each In His Own Way* at the Vassar College Experimental Theatre, Hallie Flanagan, director.

THE PLAYWRIGHT'S THEATRE

By Virgil Geddes

THE playwright's theatre is the theatre of the playwright's mind—including all that goes to make his mind what it is. This is an observation which frequently needs restating.

A playwright's artistry is often over-estimated; the degree in which he is led (and leads us) on, the quality we find it hardest to account for, almost never.

Any play worth writing writes itself. It runs away with the author.

Of the dramatist's desire there is little to be said. He is, of course, a person who finds it very difficult to entertain himself—to keep himself happy. The more he finds this true, the more willing he is to lend himself to the creation of a play.

He is a man who has learned to talk to himself and knows that he is not alone.

His "way to write a play" is the way he is now letting it write itself. If it is stirring and effective, that is all that matters.

Our most stimulating plays have nothing but their poetry to recommend them. It is all they need.

The drama can never be revitalized by the will of the playwright. It must be allowed to return to its only legitimate rhythm—wherein it exists for the mere pleasure of being.

Such drama is never "of" or "for" its day, although it may reflect it.

We need healthy tragedies more than we need decadent joys.

It has always been so.

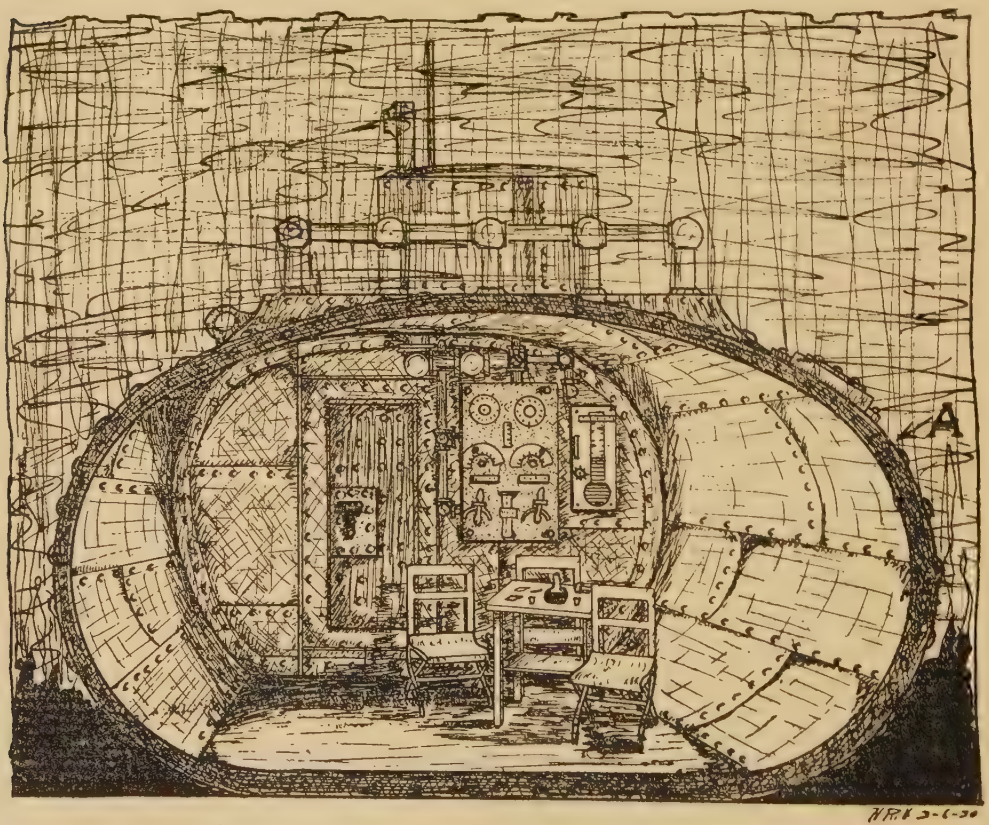
Too often we look for a meaning and miss the play. Tell me, what did Shakespeare "mean"? And Molière, did he have a "meaning"? Did either one of these men ever inflate an idea within a play and not puncture that idea before the play was ended? Did they ever, for even an act or a scene, allow us to think that they stood for something? Did they ever try to do anything other than arouse and let us feel? Were they ever controlled in this by a motive, any predetermined purpose? Did either have

anything in the way of art except a zest for the smell and aroma of life?

Ibsen did. He wanted us to think. He even tried to make us think. And what drama crept in was in spite of this. And so with Hauptmann, and Wedekind, and Shaw, and Strindberg, and too many others.

If a play seems faulty and ineffectual, it is because the original impetus of that play was not strong enough to carry itself and the author with it. Its limitations are the limitations of his imagination—the limitations of his curiosity, not so much about the world, as about the people and himself in it.

There are a few signs in America that what happened for Shakespeare and Molière may happen again for us. With the tone and pattern of our ways here undisciplined and varied, permitting our lives to thrust themselves forward with a strange vitality, too indefinite in its direction to permit conclusions, we are once again in an age asking for such a dramatist.



A sketch by H. R. Harrington of Asheville, N. C. for the one-act play Submerged *by Cottman-Shaw.*

THE HOUSE OF THE PRESENCE

By Roy Mitchell

NOWHERE in the theatre is there more need for experiment toward reform than in the shape of the house. We have fallen into the current habit about so many things in our modern world and have assumed that the kind of house we now use is in some way fundamental, that through years of the selection of improvements and the weeding out of primitive forms we have achieved at last a triumphant structure which is the most perfect vehicle of theatre the world has yet known. We have thought that whatever we may attain in the future must start where this leaves off.

It is highly improbable. We are now beginning to suspect that our people of the theatre missed the turn three centuries ago and that in order to go forward we may first have to go back. We may have to retrace our steps to the place where the mistake was made—just as scientists and philosophers frequently have to do—and go on from there. The evolution of human wisdom is full of mishaps like that.

The prime cause of the mistake on our part was the acceptance of aristocratic patronage with its inevitable measure of aristocratic contempt. The second was the acceptance of the help of artists who had only a passing interest in the art of the theatre because they already had arts of their own. Since then the mistake has been compounded by generations of architects who, because they have not understood the functions of the things they made and could have no possible occasion to use the structure after the roof was nailed on, have taken refuge in tradition, have stood out against remedy and have made each playhouse as nearly as possible like the last.

One can easily see how the director of that Renaissance theatre, when he was invited in out of the weather where he had played so long on stages of his own contriving, was a trifle uncertain how to translate his needs to a roofed structure. He would be a bit nervous the day he went to talk things over with the noble lord

who had decided that the theatre might be an art in its own right and worthy of adoption.

I fancy him middle-aged, frayed a little and shiny at elbow, and more than a little in awe of the well-groomed artists of the court. I do not think he said much at that first conference. He was too much overcome by his sudden access of prosperity and too busy, perhaps, trying to hide his cuffs. When he did try to explain something he was put off by people who knew exactly what he was trying to say, and he never got a chance to say it. He was the last come to court, you see. Painter, poet, sculptor, musician and architect were there before him and knew their way about.

So the Court Painter took charge because he had a pencil with a thick lead and anything he drew was impressive. The Court Painter said, as painters have said ever since:

"The art of the theatre is the art of one of my pictures come to life, and the first thing it must have is a frame."

You can see him, that bright sunny morning, rubbing his palms together as he turns over the great idea. He might be a man like Pepys. "A picture in a frame! How very appropriate!" Appropriate! That's the word! He is first cousin of the man who brought the word "illusion" into the theatre and he and his illusive relative have left the play to shift for itself while they have ducked up all the alleyways of appropriateness ever since.

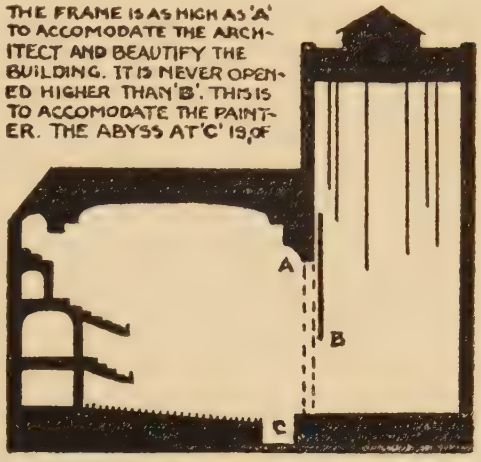
That is how we got the frame.

So the Court Painter said to the Court Architect, "Now, you build a great hall and we shall set my picture-frame on one wall of it, and it will be just as well if all the seats face my frame because I am going to do a big painting showing Strephon sporting with Amaryllis in the shade, and we can have it fixed on ropes. The effect should be very—mmmm—er—ah—effective."

So the Court Architect designed a great hall, and when you stood in the south aisle and looked north it was wonderful. When you crossed over to the north aisle and looked south it was wonderful too. That is the way it was designed. The architect drew a magnificent side-wall with a soft pencil and, laying it face down on a sheet of clean paper rubbed vigorously, and behold, there was the other wall. But it did look weak at the frame end. Even with Strephon and Amaryllis it looked weak.

So they got the Court Sculptor to amplify the frame with modeling. With masks (appropriate), and crossed swords (appropriate

again), with garlands of fruit and vegetables (a grim appropriateness here), and towels in rings (not so appropriate perhaps but decorative), and little fat Loves (Oh, very appropriate!), and all the plaster-of-paris innuendo they could think of on the sly delights of the theatre. Still it looked weak. So the Court Architect made stage boxes and swung them round at the sides in a culminating smash.



Then they asked the Court Poet how it suited him. He fancied the boxes filled with ladies to whom he addressed his verses, recited a stave or two and said "Oh, excellently." When the Court Musician arrived they asked him what he required. He looked all over the house and I think he took a long time because nobody could be so diabolically successful all in a moment. Then, picking out the place which in a theatre should be neutral and very quiet, he said, "I'll put my people here. So, ordering a trench dug for the fiddles and taking a last glance to make sure that all the seats faced the frame, the Court Artists left the theatre.

And that is how we got the house.

Of course it did not all happen so sweetly and compactly as that. In fact it took the Musician several decades to be sure where the fiddles would be most successful, as fiddles. It was kind, however, of the Court Artists to help us as they did, and they went to a great deal of trouble about it. But as always, when men go into another art than their own, they carried with them several misapprehensions.

They did not know, for example, that already, before the noble lord had paid any attention to him, the director of this inn-yard theatre had developed for himself, and in terms of his needs a beautiful and plastic method of presentation, with all the stage spaces necessary for it. It was vastly superior to the room they were decorating for the patron's house, but they never took the trouble to understand it and if they had I think they would have rejected it. The Painter despised it because it did not need his

new-found *bella perspettiva*; the Sculptor because it did not have, nor want, enrichment; the Musician resented it because it put the band up in a balcony or some such silly place. The Poet alone should have known better. He helped them slay the one form of house that has ever made poetry live in our theatre.

After the Court Artists had gone our showman must have spent a long time in the empty house, trying to fit his ancient art to its new magnificences, and thinking too late of things he should have said. His is an intricate art and hard to explain. It could be a good theatre yet, he decided, if only the Court Artists would stand by him. He had managed to fend for himself up to now, but those days were past. Still it was a great comfort to have those splendid fellows to associate with.

Mostly, I fancy, he was depressed. It is so I always imagine him, late that night, walking up and down the aisle, muttering and consoling himself as people of the theatre do when they have been over-assisted, when the visiting artist's best has crippled the theatre's best.

"We'll just have to work harder; that's all. The play's the thing anyway. The play's the thing."

The shape of any house must always await the answer to a question: Does the play go to the audience or does the audience come to the play?

If the play goes to an audience, which is a self-contained unit even if the actors never arrive, then the Court Artists were right. The assumption on which they proceeded was the old feudal one that when the nobleman wanted a drink somebody mixed it for him. When he wanted a play somebody shook up some hexameters and actors and made a play for him. In an earlier day he had his play where he had his drink—in the dining-room. In a more luxurious age it was fashionable to have a room for plays, and thither the party went to digest their dinners and be entertained until supper-time.

"Now that we have dined," one said, "and are sitting at ease in our hall, we will admit the players. Master Painter, I am told they are to do some of your living pictures."

"Nay," said the Painter modestly, "you flatter me. It is some of Master Poet's verses they are to speak."

Then the players came in, with the diffidence natural to persons who have dined in the kitchen, and the conversation ceased, except when somebody thought of something funny to say and the actors paused until he had finished saying it.

What is more natural than that the Court Artists trained in this tradition, when they were set to make a playhouse indoors, should make a glorification of what they knew best. How should they ever dream of a theatre in which the spectator was the coming and going element, and the play itself the central fact? Sitting down digesting was their central fact.

Today in another order when people come to see the play in its own house, the spirit of the theatre must emerge from its feudally conceived shape and must take on a shape that will embody its dignity.

In terms of pure design the offence of this Italian theatre is one of proportion, the auditorium is emphasized at the expense of the stage. The frame is smaller than the wall in which it is set and the scene is smaller than the frame. The spirit that begot this seeming trifle, and the long series of distortions arising out of it must always make the stage seem to be merely accessory to the auditorium, even if, as in all big houses, the stage is actually enormously larger.

Broadly speaking there are two solutions of the problem. One is that the stage, or the major part of it be actually *within* the auditorium. This is the solution the theatre of the Renaissance had already developed when the patron invited it indoors. It is the stage of Shakespeare, so long misrepresented to us by the scholars.

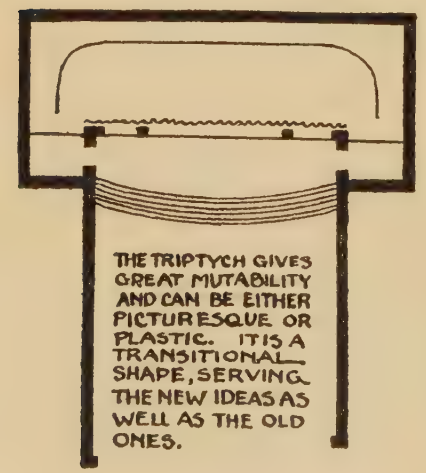
Gradually it is finding its way back again, Jocza Savits has made a fine modernization of it, and Jacques Copeau has adapted it to the needs of the modern small theatre. He has used the Elizabethan middle, rear and upper areas in such a way as to be able to alter their arrangement and has employed a sheathing of painted scenery designed for each play. His stage is the simplest of platforms and nothing but the smallest of pilasters interrupts the flow of the auditorium wall into the stage space. This theatre belongs to the play and only the play can complete it.

The other solution is to widen the proscenium opening so that there is no interruption at the sides. Thus the auditorium becomes an open ended room opening onto all the world. This is the method of the triptych stage towards which some directors are tending. The opening, too wide to be used without subdivision, is

divided into three parts, one-fifth, three-fifths and one-fifth, the parts separated by two piers. For the ordinary interior the traverse curtains are parted only enough to reveal the middle opening, and the two smaller openings of the triptych, still curtained, are flanking panels. When it is desirable to go to a great interior or to an exterior, the curtain is opened to its widest extent, giving a sweep we have never had in our picture theatre. The two piers become arbitrary elements in the design. And destroy the illusion? No more than does the bald-headed gentleman in front of you. Not nearly so much. I can find no record of the old mural painters thinking the dividing stiles in their work destroyed anything.

The triptych stage is only a complete solution of the difficulty when there is a forestage, running on a sweep across the entire front and entered by tall doors in the side walls. It may be the simple forestage Barker used, or as elaborate an arrangement of steps and platforms as Reinhardt's.

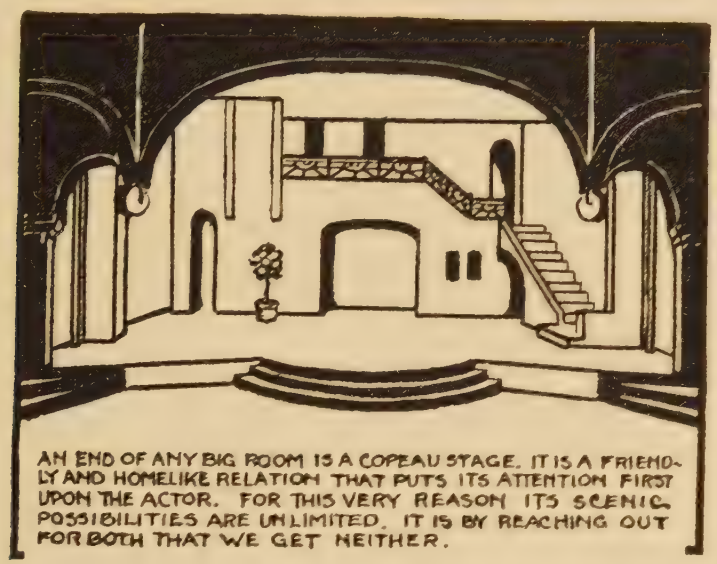
These two for our smaller houses. There is for our greater ones, with more demands upon them for spectacle, an analogy to which we are turning more frequently in a dawning realization of the latencies of the theatre. It is the constantly recurring mood in man when, to realize an ideal or to embody it, he is prompted to create a house of a living Presence where one could imagine something divine manifesting itself among men. The builders of such houses have been greatly devoted but not always greatly courageous. They have tended to think of the Presence as something outside of themselves but the theatre is the inheritor of an old and powerful magic. With more confidence it might essay to make a Presence.



The builders of such houses have had no doubt about the relation of the parts of the building. They have always put the emphasis upon the place of the Presence and not upon the place of the spectator. They have concentrated first upon a great Beyond Place and have made then a place from which it can be viewed. The Beyond Place has by every means been made to seem the larger, and the part for which the house was

built. So they have made a world and a place of vantage from which the world may be seen.

Suppose, then, assured of the dignity of the theatre, and that it deserves the best kind of house we can make for it, let us think of the house as primarily for the art itself. The stage is its home, and in order that the play may be shared let us think of an annex



AN END OF ANY BIG ROOM IS A COPEAU STAGE. IT IS A FRIENDLY AND HOMELIKE RELATION THAT PUTS ITS ATTENTION FIRST UPON THE ACTOR. FOR THIS VERY REASON ITS SCENIC POSSIBILITIES ARE UNLIMITED. IT IS BY REACHING OUT FOR BOTH THAT WE GET NEITHER.

for those who come to participate in it. We need not stint the annex but we should use every device of arrangement and design to prevent anybody mistaking the annex for the theatre itself. Under no circumstances must we set up any structural barrier between the two. No cross walls, no impassible ledges, no tricky completion of room. If we used curtains, and we would be better off when we did not, we should swell the line of the curtains forward, so that when we opened them we would admit the audience into our world, never us into theirs.

If my reader cares to visualize more definitely what I mean, let him slip some week day into a church—not a snug auditorium, built on the model of our theatres, for a chat about the Volstead Act—a church in the older manner, with a transept. Let him run his view past the pier that marks the meeting of nave and transept walls at the left, away into the dusk; then sweep across to the right until his line of sight runs past the other corner, and he will feel the effort of those old Colleges of Builders, creating in stone the

seeming of a little world opening into a great one—an embouchment of vision into a Beyond Place.

Imagine a play there at the crossing. It could not be a mean play; it would have to be a big one. Perhaps it would be on wide steps, perhaps on a mound, perhaps on a containing arrangement of daïses. Perhaps it would be on a great disc that could come to life and swing with the play. Imagine the play there making its own magic in terms of its own soul. It need not be a gloomy soul. It might sometimes be a tragic one, but it could just as well be a soul that revealed itself in gaiety, a soul instinct with joy and buoyancy and grace, a soul of laughter and color and light.

Ours is the only art whose life depends upon its power to conjure up a living something—a Presence—and it needs a form peculiarly suited to it, a form massive enough and proud enough to create respect, and free enough for the peculiar necessities of motion, for ebb and flow, for swirl, for expansion and contraction, for altitude, for ascent and descent, for approach and recession. We must be able to spread our play out until it covers a whole world, or concentrate it to a point and lift it high in space.

Here is a field for experiment. What form will give the art of the theatre most power? What most simplicity? What most fluency? What will give us a kind of scene that is so noble we need not hide it but that can stand in full view until the actors enter it and the play begins? What can we make that will give us sight-lines proceeding from the little spectator to the big play instead of from the big spectator to the little play? What shape of building and what form of stage will magnify our play and most efficiently sweep people into its mood, instead of magnifying them and making it harder for the play to move them. They do not come to be magnified: they come to be moved.

There are many shapes for the dwelling of the art of the theatre and I think if we could write them down on paper we would find that we are now the possessors of the one which is meanest and most crippling of them all. A parlor—and everywhere we look are noble lords with toothpicks in their mouths.

TWELFTH NIGHT

A scene from Shakespeare's comedy directed by Walter Sinclair at Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré in New Orleans. With the following pages it forms a part of the photographic record of distinguished Shakespearean productions made by the Tributary Theatre during the year.

Another scene from *Twelfth Night* at Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré (New Orleans). Below: *Twelfth Night* at College of William and Mary, director, Althea Hunt.

Otto John Gaul

SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY

The Buffalo Studio Players in a production of *Twelfth Night,* directed by Jane Keeler. Below: Students of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in *As You Like It.*

R. W. Sleath

Two scenes from the Carnegie Institute of Technology Dramatic Department's production of *Love's Labour's Lost,* directed by B. Iden Payne.

Standiford

Pollard Crowther

The University of Louisville Players' production of *Othello,* directed by Boyd Martin. Below: The Oxford University Dramatic Society (England) produces *Macbeth.*

SHAKESPEAREAN COMEDY

Two scenes from the University of Michigan Play Production Department's performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Valentine B. Windt.

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Two scenes from *Julius Caesar* as presented at the Pasadena Community Playhouse under the direction of Gilmor Brown. (*Photographs by Hiller*)

The gravediggers in the University of Nebraska production of *Hamlet,* directed by H. Alice Howell.

ACTION IN DRAMA

What It Is and Is Not

By O. W. Firkins

I SHOWED a manuscript play to the director of a theatre. Between civilities he found time to remark: "No action. I keep waiting for somebody to get up and smash a window." I agreed with his doubts of the play; I agreed with his distrust of the action. Our point of difference was that I was perfectly calm on the absence of smashed windows.

This led me to ask myself what action was to a manager, to a playgoer; what it was to myself. The conclusions I reached seemed to me to be new, although this novelty may be simply the measure of my ignorance.

The average playgoer tends to think that speech and action are divided, though adjacent, fields, that they represent two degrees of vividness, and that action stands for the superior degree. When one man on the stage kills another, that is action; when he puts his feet upon a table, that is action. The actions differ greatly in importance (the playgoer sees that), but for him they possess in common an important something which is not possessed by the most passionate or energetic speech. A man robs a till—*Action.* A judge says: "Three years."—*Speech.* A man boards a steamer—*Action.* A sovereign's voice orders his fleet to move against the enemy—*Speech.* A man writes a challenge to a duel—*Action* (he uses his hand). He utters a challenge to a duel—*Speech* (he uses his voice). The fact that both demonstrations have exactly the same purposes and results, and that speech is the more exciting of the two, makes no difference. A daughter wounds her father with a stiletto—*Action.* The six-year-old girl in *A Celebrated Case,* by repeating her murdered mother's dying words: "Darling, I am with your father," sends that innocent father to the galleys—*Speech.* A hangman tightens a noose—*Action.* The truth-telling nun's lying "Yes" in *The Two Orphans* sends a doomed girl to liberty and an uncondemned girl to the guillotine—*Speech.*

A playgoer may think that any movement of the human body, or of any noticeable part of it, is an act. My own definition of action in drama excludes many such movements and includes many things which the average playgoer would classify as speech. When I want a term for action in the playgoer's sense, I shall refer to it as nominal or so-called action. The first thing to be said is that there is no logical distinction between so-called action and speech. A man, rising from a chair, lifts his body from the ground. Is that action? Certainly. Without rising, he lifts his arm or his leg. Action? Yes. He lifts his hand or his foot. Action? Yes. He lifts his finger. Yes—after a second's thought. He lifts his eyelid. Yes—reluctantly. His eyebrow? Yes—rebelliously (after all, it's something, and it isn't speech). Very well. He lifts his upper jaw, he lifts his lip, and he pronounces a word. Action? The philosopher and the anatomist must answer "Yes."

Why is this "Yes" so difficult to say? Because we are not interested in these movements of the jaw and lip as movements; we are interested only in the sounds which they produce. Why in the sounds and not in the movements? Because the sounds tell us something of the speaker's mind. If the movements did as much, if the lip *curled* instead of framing a letter, that, too, would interest us. Indeed, it must be freely granted that, where a choice between means is possible, movement in nine cases out of ten expresses more than words. This is not because the imagination is more impressible by sights than sounds; were this true, music would be a less imaginative art than painting, and a visible word (i.e., a word in script or print) would be more impressive than its spoken counterpart. Both these notions are contrary to fact. The reason why we respond to expressive sights more willingly than to expressive sounds is that speech employs a system of arbitrary signs called an alphabet, whereas gesture (an insufficient word, but let it pass) uses natural signs, signs in which nature, not convention, furnishes at once both the impulse toward the act and the key to its interpretation. When the sound ceases to be conventional, the distinction vanishes. A laugh is just as theatrical as a gesture.

Textbooks are liberal of examples of the inferiority of words to movements in the matter of expressiveness. "I'll thrash you," says less than a shaken fist. "Come here" is less powerful than to beckon. "Take notice" is meaningless beside a wink. In the presence of a

shrug, a yawn, vocabulary grovels. When we wish to express worthlessness, we snap our fingers—at the dictionary. The word "supercilious" as a substitute for the act makes us lift our eyebrows. The act of touching the finger to the forehead divests the *word* "insanity" of half its power. Compare "I kiss your hand" at the close of a Spanish letter with the act.

All this is convincing, and merits cordial emphasis; but we must not be wheedled into the belief that this superiority is absolute, that it is necessary, or even universal. Cases occur where speech outvalues movement. Finger on lip is stronger than "Hush" or "Be still"; it is less strong than the abnormally forcible "Shut up." "Halt" is a forceful word—more forceful probably than the correlated gestures. The lifting of priestly hands is more impressive than the text of most benedictions; but "The peace of God which passeth understanding" affects me more than any gesture. We have no bodily movements which match the vigor of our imprecations. "Damn you" and "Go to hell" have no equivalents in the field of gesture. Nothing in the nature of words keeps them from rising to the impressiveness of movements.

In comparing speech with so-called action, we tend to compare this action with its own reflection in speech, i.e., with narrative. But this comparison is most unfair, because narrative is one among many forms of stage speech, and is commonly a feeble form. We quote:

"Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,"

The difference between the word and the visible transaction is rightly felt to be immense, but from this sure ground we proceed to the thoughtless assumption that the same inferiority pertains to Hamlet's cry:

"By heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me."

But this word of Hamlet's is not the spectrum or attenuation of a fact; it is a fact itself, a fact in its own right, a granule of history, and, what is more, a step in a progressive movement. Probably less than nineteen-twentieths of stage speech is subject to the devastating ordeal of comparison with an offstage act which it reports.

A speech may be many things; it may be an assertion, an expression of feeling, an incident, an occurrence, an event, a disaster, almost a catastrophe. I adduce examples.

Assertion:

Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn.

Expression of feeling:

Qu'il mourût. (From Corneille's *Horace.*)

Incident:

Hedda. Look there! She has left her old bonnet lying about on a chair. (Miss Tesman, now in the room, owns the bonnet.)

Occurrence:

Menas to Pompey. These three world-sharers, these competitors,
Are in thy vessel; let me cut the cable. (The mere proposition is an occurrence.)

Event:

Lear to Regan. To thee and thine, hereditary ever,
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom.
(Not mere report, but actual bestowal.)

Disaster:

Magda to Schwartz. How do you know that he was the only one? ("The terrible line which," Mr. Shaw says, "strikes the Colonel dead.")

Catastrophe:

Bernick (from behind the door, to Krap): *The Indian Girl* is to sail. (An order and revocable; hence not, perhaps, a full catastrophe.)

The last five instances are acts, and they are words; the inference is unmistakable. This is no squeamish critic's finical distinction; it is backed by common usage. In real life a plea, a charge, a testimony, is an act; a verdict is an act; a sentence is an act: all are accomplished by words. An edict, a ukase, is an act; we talk fluently of acts of Congress, acts of Parliament. A proclamation made up of nothing more drastic than words may inspire a revolt and divide a kingdom. To propose, to accept, to decline, marriage is an act; to jilt is an act: the vehicle of all these acts is words. Are we told of the impressiveness of movement? Speech is movement. How does a man win a suit in law or love? By speech. How does he learn that that suit is won or lost? By speech again.

Speech, on or off the stage, may be action. What is dramatic action? A play is a series of states of mind, of changing states of mind; or rather, it is a means of acquainting us with such a series. Action occurs upon the stage when any pointed change in mental states is communicated to the audience by some clear and forcible means. It occurs whenever the dramatist brings home to us an angle, switch, or tack in the psychology. Actors have both bodies and voices, and, where a choice is possible, the body usually brings the mental shift more vividly before us than the voice. Hence the very proper emphasis on bodily movements, and the soundness of the growing interest in stage directions and in stage directorship. Trouble begins when we confound the preferred means with the end, when we insist that movement is identical with action.

I act when I say to you on stage or off: "Your father is a murderer," or "Your wife is a harlot." That is not conversation, not discourse; that is conduct. It is conduct (or action), because it works a mental revolution in the hearer.

This doctrine is open to a simple but convincing test. Granting its truth, all bodily movements on the stage that are not interpretative, that offer no clues to changing mental states, should be ineffectual and tiresome. Let us put a question or two. Why is no work ever done upon the stage even in working-places at working-hours by working-people? Why is work left out even when its propriety is manifest, and its absence is a wrong to probability? Why would a stage director shudder at the thought of letting a wood-sawyer saw wood for five successive minutes on the stage? Why is a stage typist never permitted to suspend her flirtations long enough to strike fifty consecutive keys? Because bodily movement without meaning, unrevealing, uncommunicative movement is duller than the dullest harangue which a recriminating audience ever visited with groans and hisses. Movement is sometimes action. When? Speech is sometimes action. When? Is it not clear that the answer to both questions is the same, that either becomes action when it becomes the forceful indicator of a pointed mental change?

Two further reenforcing points must not be slighted. There are cases where things even less palpable than speech may have all the virtue, all the potency, of action. At the close of Act I of Lonsdale's *Aren't We All?* the tempted husband gives the first kiss to the siren. The wife appears, sees the kiss, looks on in silence while the curtain falls. There are two bodily movements in this situation, but

what affects us is our sight of the wife's sight of the transgression. Sight as an agent is far less palpable than speech; yet let it once become the clew to an upheaval in a woman's mind, and it puts on all the properties of action. Stranger yet, we may be powerfully affected without the aid of vision if we merely know that somebody behind the scenes is seeing something that recasts the shape of life. In Bulwer's *Richelieu* the young spendthrift and rioter de Mauprat is sent into a room offstage to face the executioner. What he really meets is his ladylove and destined wife whom the wily and sportive old ecclesiastic has substituted for the grimmer apparition. We are moved as if by action, yet the cause is neither speech nor movement, but the *idea* of a *sight*.

Silence is at times almost a variety of speech. It is evidence of two of the most affecting conditions in the world, guilt and death; as such, the mental changes which it induces or evinces may be revolutionary. When this happens, it acts. In Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* after the coronation at Rheims Joan's peasant father accuses her before the court of witchcraft. Successively her friends implore her for denial; successively she declines to speak; successively their terrors and misgivings grow. Silence is damning, and to damn is to act. Silence by its very nothingness is the culminating proof that anything that makes us realize a drastic mental change is action.

Let me guard very briefly against four misconceptions. First, I most emphatically do not want tame drama; I deplore the diminution of excitement on the contemporary stage. Secondly, I do not want more psychology. I think contemporary drama shoulders all the psychology that it can carry; *Strange Interlude* shoulders rather more. Thirdly, I do not think that means are indifferent. Means in drama are next to all-important. Pointed mental change is worthless without pointed indication of that change. Fourthly, I have no quarrel with the extensive use of so-called action—movements of bodies or of properties—on the contemporary stage. I do indeed think that its vogue has confused our thinking; and the object of this essay is not to alter practice, but to remedy confusion.

Program signet for the Hull House Theatre, Chicago.

LITTLE THEATRE PORTRAITS

An Island Theatre—Omaha's Community Playhouse—Bath Citizen House—A Theatre of the Nations

GALVESTON'S LITTLE THEATRE — By PETER AMES VINCENT

WE are on an island that three times during the past fifty years has been entirely covered by the sea. This has been during the terrible hurricanes that sometimes lash the Gulf of Mexico during the summer months. An imposing sea wall now protects us from these monster waves.

Out of the reach of long-flung fingers of salt spray that fly like torn banners from the front ranks of the surf, palms and eucalyptus trees and oleander shrubs throw a semi-tropical shade across the shell-white streets and the boulevards.

Our theatre is down town, ten blocks from the Gulf, but often during the spring and winter months the grey-green stucco walls of our two-story building are wrapped in a salt mist that smells and tastes of the sea.

From September fifteenth, when the thermometer is around ninety-eight, until the last of May when it is again about ninety, we are working in our theatre upon our season of six plays.

This is our eighth season. Our theatre building, which we own, is somewhat old and mouldering, but the garden behind it is full of hibiscus and oleanders and bougainvillea. Inside the walls we have arranged a comfortable plant, with a small but adequate stage, and with stage lighting especially designed for our needs.

We started as an experimental theatre, and during our first season produced one play. During the two years that followed we produced three plays each season. In the six succeeding years we produced six plays each season.

Our community is unusual—we are small, and isolated in a sense. A third of the population is Negro, but the white population is

rather unusually metropolitan. Being the largest cotton exporting port in the country, our city has representation from many European business firms—English, Spanish, German and Belgian. Our audiences care as much for Ibsen and Shaw as for Molnar and Eugene O'Neill.

During the last three seasons we have produced *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House, Beyond the Horizon* and *Anna Christie, Androcles and the Lion, Candida* and *Man and Superman,* Kelly's *The Show-Off* and *Craig's Wife,* Martinez Sierras' *Cradle Song,* and *The Romantic Young Lady, The White-Headed Boy, The Importance of Being Earnest, Ned McCobb's Daughter* and St. John Ervine's *The Ship.*

Our settings are designed and executed in our own workshop.

Perhaps, because we are islanders, we do not care for what the rest of the Little Theatre world thinks of us—we have never entered "contests", nor have we traveled abroad as an acting company. Our work keeps us at home, and that work is never done. Once in a spirit of recklessness, a visiting impresario offered us the chance to take our *Hedda Gabler* production to the mainland and play in the civic auditorium. It was an honor we could not accept. What is born on our little stage lives its brief life there, and we immediately go on to something else.

It is the theatre that we serve, or rather the love of the theatre that our cosmopolitan audiences know. We profess to understand the plays we do, and we do them with all the spirit and fervor that our desire to be the master of what the play exacts will allow.

If some of us are lucky enough to have a glimpse once or twice a year of the New York season, or a few weeks in London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin or Salzburg, our theatre is so much the richer for that. Some of us who work in the theatre are very young, have never been far from our island, in fact. And some of us have seen Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, Réjane and Ada Rehan.

We keep in touch with the people who seem to us to be important in the theatre—O'Neill, Nathan, Gordon Craig. We give their great ships a wig-wag from our little beacon burning in the sea. We cannot help, living here on the island, feeling the strange power of the sea, as people living in cathedral towns must feel the presence of the cathedral. And so our love for and interest in the theatre is not so much a part of a movement in the theatre of today, as a part of some eternal sweep of the world theatre, from which we draw

our courage and our faith. If we have a creed it is not so much for "bigger and better plays", or "bigger and better audiences", but a creed akin to that of Louis Dubedat, which we would translate into terms of the drama, the theatre and the theatre arts.

Note: Peter Ames Vincent died at Galveston, April 26, 1930. The theatre will continue.

Omaha's Playhouse

By Eugene Konecky

THE HAIRY APE in Omaha, March 24th to April 2nd, 1930, staged by the Omaha Community Playhouse, under the direction of Bernard Szold, proved to be an exceptionally significant production, far more significant than the presentation of *Strange Interlude* by a travelling cast several months before. *Strange Interlude* came and went; it caused a ripple of excitement and comment, and was gradually forgotten as an exotic dramatic flair. Not so with *The Hairy Ape*. *The Hairy Ape* did things to the two thousand showgoers who witnessed its performances, to the entire personnel of the Omaha Community Playhouse and to its deepest traditions. In order to understand this, you must know a few salient facts about Omaha.

Omaha is a proud little inland metropolis of the middle-west, hopefully growing on the banks of the unnavigable, "big muddy" Missouri. The hope is that sufficient funds soon may be appropriated by Congress to sustain engineering projects to make the river navigable. In such an event, Omaha feels that its strategic location near the nation's centre would make it the key-point of a new inland empire which would rival the supremacy of Chicago and St. Louis and divert the national stream of prosperity into the metropolis which is now, according to the Chamber of Commerce, the nation's second largest live stock and packing market. Industrially, Omaha is a mere potentiality; agriculturally, it lies in the heart of a vast wheat-and-corn belt and a fertile cattle country.

As one of the gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce pathetically admitted, Omaha "is commercially top-heavy." The need of cultural development has been felt, but not very long. This is natural, for Omaha was born just prior to the Civil War. Since then, Nebraska has swiftly passed through the historic periods of cattle-raising, homesteading, railroading and farming. Now, the era of industry and finance has begun. So immured is Omaha in the traditions of the agricultural west, that for more than twenty years it boasted of its "Cowboy Mayor", Jim Dahlman, recently

deceased. Omaha's population is about seventy-five per cent native-born white. Its wealth came out of the soil. On the thousands of Nebraska farms from which Omaha derived its population, the men and women who painfully acquired this wealth by struggle with the soil, lived in utter simplicity. Their literature was mainly the school primer and the Bible. Nebraska and Iowa constitute the much-defamed "bible belt." Their beliefs were founded in religion, the family and the home. Fifty-five per cent of the people in Omaha, true to these traditions, own their homes.

This picture does not pretend to be complete. It merely indicates the fundamental social, economic character of Omaha, its essential traditions and outlook. Sturdy, honest, simple, sincere, these people have attained a homogeneous provincialism utterly unlike the erudite traditions of the cosmopolitan cities of the east and west. They do not understand the highly industrial east for which they have a suspicious regard, sometimes as stubbornly intolerant as the sophisticate contempt of many easterners, to whom they are just "yokels." They know little or nothing of sweatshops, or labor struggles, of theoretic, laboratory or industrial sciences, of complex urban problems of sex, economics and racial assimilation.

Omaha now has its symphony orchestra, music clubs, art institute, drama league, political and literary organizations.

The first important effort to create a local community drama took the name of the Folk Theatre. I remember only one production of this group, almost ten years ago, the presentation of a number of one-act plays. This enterprise was shortly defunct, principally because of lack of experience and proper direction, insufficient finances and clannishness. Far from being a Folk Theatre, it was a pretentious theatricality.

The next phase was more promising. Under the vigorous initiation of the proprietor of a dramatic school, and with the half-hearted support of the Omaha Drama League, several seasons were passed, principally in the production of mediocre one-act plays presented in the usual awkward elaboration of collegiate amateurs. The failure of this theatre may be attributed to the fact that it was too much an adjunct of the school. Simultaneous with this venture, was a competing institution known, I believe, as Craig's Little Theatre, a really better and more courageous attempt to present vital drama, but too exclusive to represent the community.

The present institution known as the Omaha Community Play-

Costume designs by Muriel Sibell for *The Wonder Hat,* directed by E. J. West at the University of Colorado Little Theatre, summer session.

Plays by Eugene O'Neill. The upper picture shows Bernard Szold's production of *The Hairy Ape* (in which Mr. Szold played the leading part) at the Omaha Community Playhouse, and the lower picture shows *Anna Christie,* presented by the students of the University of Nevada at Reno.

The Bath Citizen House (England) production of *Harlequin.* Below: The Schenectady Civic Players' production of Sierra's *Cradle Song.*

Sigurd Fischer

Harvey Patteson

Edrington's Studio

Three types of Tributary Theatre Architecture. Above: The Cleveland Playhouse. Center: San Pedro Playhouse at San Antonio, Texas. Below: The Little Theatre of the Last Frontier at Westlaco, Texas.

house commenced its activities in 1925, under the direction of Mr. Gregory Foley. It operated naively on the idea that to be a community playhouse, the only thing necessary was to get as many people in the community to participate as possible. That was the intention, but Mr. Foley discovered that too many people in the community had other interests and obligations. Consequently, between 1925 and 1928, the community playhouse echoed familiarly with certain names. In that period there were approximately twenty-five productions, among them many creditable performances including: *The Devil's Disciple, Liliom, Outward Bound, Anna Christie, He Who Gets Slapped, Pygmalion, Lady Windermere's Fan, R. U. R., Beyond the Horizon, Saturday's Children* and *The Enemy*. There were also vaudeville presentations, some romantic and comedy hits and a number of revivals While the attendance was excellent, production costs were excessive, and in the spring of 1928, the playhouse directors found themselves, a number of them at least, ready to declare bankruptcy.

Fortunately Omaha was by this time too culture-conscious to lay down on the job because of a mere matter of finances. Preceding the 1928-1929 season, a reorganization took place which included the purchase of an accessible tract of land for $15,000, and the construction of the playhouse itself for a like amount. This was a courageous venture, a positive indication of the determination of the promoters of the playhouse to make it a community enterprise.

Mr. Bernard Szold, formerly affiliated with the Birmingham Little Theatre, was assigned the directorship for the season beginning in 1928. Szold was something new to Omaha. He had the typical appearance of the eccentric artist. Moreover, he appeared to have the typical indifference of the artist to conventional ways of doing things. Instead of casting his plays by intuitive selection of "types"—he threw open the doors and picked his people for their dramatic ability. He believed that a community playhouse represented the whole community, and he had a knack of making friends with every kind of man, woman and child in the community.

In two seasons, Szold has in fourteen productions, achieved extraordinary excellence in four plays, *Dear Brutus, Sun Up, Escape* and *The Hairy Ape*. His initial production, *Aren't We All,* was also well done. The particular merit of Szold's productions is the inculcation of sincerity into the performances of his amateurs. Moreover, Szold has succeeded in overcoming the inhi-

bitions of the puritan and the prude in his players. A notable press comment made on the performance of *Anna Christie* under Foley, was that the players gasped or inhaled or practically whispered when they spoke alleged profane lines. On one occasion (it was after the production of *Liliom*) an Omaha daily editorially upbraided the playhouse for degrading the theatre with a production that was obviously concerned with immoralities and lust. Instead of standing on its own two independent artistic feet, the playhouse obtained the defense of a minister who was a member of the board of directors, this gentleman of the cloth subscribing to the moral value of *Liliom*.

It was not Szold alone who established a foundation of verbal freedom in Omaha. *What Price Glory, The Cock-Eyed World,* and *The Front Page,* shared in the honors of making effective the larger process of liberation from the strictures of provincial moralism. It was thus that Omaha found itself ready for *The Hairy Ape.*

In no respect was the production of *The Hairy Ape* an amateur affair. The scenic effects were simple, impressionistic. Color was utilized with economy. The back-stage crew operated in unison, with an efficiency and sureness accomplished through several seasons of experimentation and discipline. The successive scenes moved swiftly to their climax. The players were so absorbed in their characterizations that they achieved a complete illusion of realism in what is perhaps O'Neill's most symbolical drama.

Through four weeks of rehearsals and almost two weeks of performance Szold assembled and fused these amateurs, few of whom in the beginning had any idea of what it was all about, into a splendid comprehending dramatic group, whose living grasp of the essential tragedy crossed the footlights and gripped the audience.

Many of each night's audience took the trouble to express their reaction to the play in writing. A school principal wrote: "I think it is a splendid sociological study, a skillful picture of unbelievable social gaps. How can it fail to open people's eyes?" A college student just old enough to vote said: "It is unusual, powerful, makes one think." A twenty-three-year-old teacher described it as "a forceful realistic presentation—daring in its crudeness, fundamental in its thinking." A middle-aged writer said "tremendous symbolism, tremendously expressing the struggle across the gulf between capital and labor."

One belligerent playgoer characterized it as "rotten entertain-

ment, should be suppressed, effect on weaker minds vicious, one a season plenty." A fifty-year-old army officer admonished us to "conform or perish." Another army officer of the same age wrote "There is suggested the possible cumulative effect of resentment in the future if class distinctions become further accentuated. If the masses give them thought, the upper classes, who would not like to think about it, may have to." One housewife "over 21" who stigmatized the play as "sordid" said "I enjoyed it." A young college instructor found it "an unforgettable production remarkable mainly for its atmosphere and sincerity. The travail of a soul struggling to be born." Of course, there were also fierce assaults on the production as "rotten, indecent, vicious, disgusting, profane." Some good citizens went home wounded by the scenes of sweat, and toil, stupidity, violence, scorn and despair. Some were so engaged by the language that they heard nothing else, and saw only the blurring smoke of the stokehold.

The important social fact of such productions as this is that having learned to interpret the vital dramas which arise out of other sociological milieus a community can better understand its own nature and spirit and so open up the way to original creative productions instead of imitations. As Mr. Keene Abbott, dramatic critic for the *Omaha World-Herald* simply and honestly put it: "There are possibilities in the Community Playhouse. It hasn't done anything yet, that is, in producing plays that are a reflection of our own life and local color." That will be the next step. The production of *The Hairy Ape,* and its success, indicate that the possibilities may be realized under the versatile hand of Bernard Szold, actor, director, writer, painter, and student of literature. If he is accorded support by the Playhouse directors, Omaha may really grow something out of the soil of mid-western America.

BATH CITIZEN HOUSE — By HAROLD DOWNS

BATH Citizen House is a pivotal point in the Little Theatre Movement of Great Britain, well known throughout the country, and in several ways operating far from its base. The home of the organization is an historical building rich in art treasures and bearing the impress of academic and practical interest in Drama and the Theatre. It was founded in 1914, largely through the interests and designs of Helen Hope, with whom was associated Consuelo de Reyes (Mrs. Peter King), now the ad-

ministrative and executive head. She is assisted by Peter King, an expert in stage setting and modern lighting, Marion Radford, a specialist in stage costume design, and E. Barr. There is an indoor theatre with a seating capacity of 200, and an open air roof theatre with accommodation for fewer people. The wardrobe at Bath Citizen House is drawn upon by Little Theatre groups all over the country for every type of play. It includes a large number of Celtic, Saxon, Norman, Mediaeval, Shakespearean, Stuart, Restoration, Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-century stage dresses, with special departments for Fantastic, Fairy and Foreign Costumes, and has been built up from the wardrobes of notable theatrical personages including Ellen Terry and Henry Irving, and materially assisted by a contribution made by Lord Howard de Walden a few years ago.

The original intention of Miss Hope and her helpers was to make Citizen House a social center. They began by organizing concerts and entertainments for soldiers and quickly extended their activities. At the end of the war the opportunity came to acquire the building that was converted into the Little Theatre, now a centre of comprehensive dramatic and theatrical activities. Members write plays, design and make scenery and costumes, produce plays and go on tours. Plans to build an entirely new theatre, with all modern accessories for presentation, are under consideration.

In the early days there was almost exclusive concentration on Passion Plays, Moralities, and the like, written by members. During recent years this policy has been modified. The latest production at the Citizen House is a dramatized version of Jane Austin's *Northanger Abbey.* Plays given during recent years in the Little Theatre have included *Columbine in Cricklebury,* by Lady Margaret Sackville, constructed for the stage by Forbes Dawson; *Piers Plowman's Pilgrimage,* by Mrs. G. K. Chesterton, incidental music by Bridget Muller; *Harlequin, A Ballad of Bath Ghosts or The Romance of a Century, 1702-1797,* in eight episodes and an epilogue, reintroducing Bath personalities in historic scenes.

The development of the touring system is an interesting feature of the theatre's activity. The Players have their own motor transport facilities and have toured to London and other large cities.

The increasing interest taken by educational authorities in drama and the theatre as educational media is reflected in the

organization of the week-end and summer schools held at Citizen House, attended by students from many countries—last year there were several from America. At these summer schools lectures are given by eminent authorities, debates and discussions are arranged, lessons in all phases of dramatic and theatrical art are given, and in both the indoor and outdoor theatres the lessons learned are applied by the students who are thus not only students, but actors, actresses, stage managers, producers, designers, and even stage "hands." Greek, Shakespearean and modern plays are included in the programmes.

Much nonsense is written and spoken about the value of self-expression through dramatic and theatrical art, but the self-expression that characterizes the work of Citizen House is soundly based. It is amateur and it is communal in the best and purest meaning of that much abused word.

A Theatre of the Nations

By Rita S. Newman

PLANS are afoot in Cleveland to continue an experiment made this year which has been unique in the history of the American theatre. Twenty-six nations have united in presenting a cycle of their native dramas and musical productions, which began in January and continued until the 25th of May.

The groups were not mustered for the express purpose of joining in an international Festival. Each has been plodding along quietly for years in its hidden quarter of the city. Year after year neighborhood halls have harbored their productions and inhabitants of the neighborhood have attended these exhibitions of an old world culture.

Now, sponsored by *The Plain Dealer* of Cleveland,, they are playing to capacity audiences in Cleveland's ten-million-dollar Public Hall which has seventeen auditoriums under its roof. Two of these are regular theatres. One, called the Little Theatre, seats 700. The other is called the Music Hall and seats 3,000. Both have modern lighting equipment and well appointed stages, dressing-rooms, et cetera. The Little Theatre has housed all Theatre of the Nations' plays save those warranting use of the Music Hall.

All productions have been given in the native tongue and costume of each group. Croatian, Czech, and Danish costumes vied with the Spanish, Syrian and Russian in picturesqueness. The variety in the type of productions was as great as that in language and dress.

The reception accorded to this undertaking has been little short of miraculous. At some performances hundreds were turned away. At least 90% of those who attended belonged to the foreign groups presenting the plays, who themselves promoted the sale of seats. Prices ranged from fifty cents to three dollars.

The directors of this experiment secured the services of K. Elmo Lowe and Max Eisenstat, both of the Cleveland Playhouse, as assistant director and technical director. They devised a permanent set of great flexibility which could be adapted to any number of scenes from a peasant's hut to a royal palace.

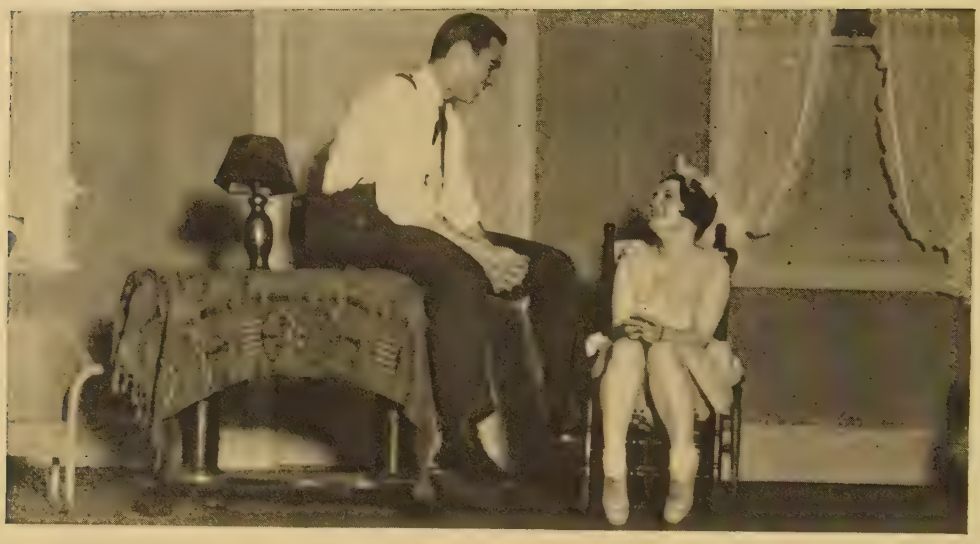
The first production was Schiller's *Robbers,* given in Arabic by the members of the Syrian-American club. In *Maria Doxapatri* which followed, the Greeks chose a historic drama by Dmitrios Vernadakis. The play, in so-called high modern Greek, deals with the temporary conquest of Greece by the Frankish leaders during the time of the fourth crusade, and is interesting as an example of 19th century Greek drama. In striking contrast to the gleaming helmets and flashing swords of the Greek military play were the calicos and preacher's garb of *Roseanne,* the offering of the Gilpin Players. This Negro group, which won attention through its performances of Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom* at the Little Theatre in Cleveland, has been doing noteworthy work for eight years. The singing of the spirituals almost equalled that in *Porgy.* The African costumes of the ushers, with their bizarre head-dress added greatly to the vividness of the scene.

In *Janos Vitez,* a Hungarian musical fantasy with a cast of two hundred, by Sandor Petofi, Hungary's national poet and hero, the property man included among his other duties the care of live horses and a flock of sheep. True to the tradition the part of the peasant lad, Janos, was played by a woman. A peasant boy again featured as hero in *The Spinners,* the five-act musical comedy put on by the Slovaks. The spinners were girls for whom the art of spinning was a relic of by-gone days and they had to be patiently drilled in pulling the flax into a thread, twisting it and winding it on the spindle.

The Czech Singing Society gave Smetana's comic opera *The Bartered Bride,* in which the role of Vasek, a rustic simpleton, was exceptionally well enacted. They were followed by the Slovenian Singing Society in the three-act opera *Urh, Count of Celje.*

The Croatian drama, *Sokica,* told the romance of a soldier and his peasant sweetheart, with all the entanglements ensuing from a

Two comedies of widely separated periods. Above: The first English farce, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, produced under the direction of W. H. Trumbauer, Alabama College, Montevallo, Alabama. Below: Mrs. *Bumpstead-Leigh*, Little Theatre of Duluth, Alan Wallace, director.



The colleges vary their programs: The Greensboro College Players present Juliet Wilbor Tompkins' *Once There Was A Princess,* directed by Elba Henninger; Hunter College (New York) presents Milne's *The Ivory Door* directed by Cloyde Duvall Dalzell; and Cornell University presents Jules Romains' *Dr. Knock* directed by Alexander Drummond.

father's stubborn determination to prevent the marriage. The Swedish play *Johan Ulfstjerne,* was followed by Sudermann's *Die Ehre* given by the United German Players.

La Maison Française produced Moliere's *La Malade Imaginaire* preceded by *La Pax Chez Soi.* During the same week the United Spanish Societies gave *La Malquerida,* by Benevente.

The Footsteps of the Messiah, adapted from a play by Sholem Asch was performed under the auspices of the Zohar Hebrew Dramatic School.

Next came the offerings of the Polish Amateur Dramatic Clubs, *A Fight For Liberty* and *A Seventeenth Century Polish Wedding.*

The Lithuanian Cultural Garden League presented under its auspices *Rutvile* by V. Nagornoski. *The Northerners,* by the Finnish group was followed by the Danish play, *Rasmine's Wedding.*

The Rabbi's Journey by Harry Sacher was selected for a Yiddish performance, and the Russians gave a one-act comedy *Keep Your Given Word,* and a three-act operetta. The Ukranian and the Irish performances were next and the concluding production was Sardou's *Tosca,* presented by the Italian Dramatic Club.

It is hard to estimate just how far-reaching the influence of such an international theatre may be. There is no doubt that through it the foreign population will be kept in much closer touch with its American environment. Perhaps even greater will be the benefit to the American community, which is just beginning to understand and appreciate something of the background, the culture and the art of the peoples who have become indissolubly a part of our own nation.

Poster design for Paul Green's The Field God *at the Goodman Theatre.*

THE ART OF SPEECH IN TEXAS

By WINDSOR P. DAGGETT

A FEW years ago "Speech Arts in Texas" would have suggested an organization of school teachers with an honorary membership of free-lancers who taught elocution and Delsarte in parlor studios. Through the service of the Little Theatres, "speech arts in Texas" no longer refers to an organization but to a state of mind, although teachers with scientific speech training have a firmer foundation and organization than ever before, and the well-equipped teacher of phonetics is called to more active service both in the school and in the theatre. As audience, the public has stepped into the picture. This audience is speech arts' frankest critic and its paying customer. The teacher is no longer the fault-finder and lone idealist; the public is the idealist finding fault when the teacher of speech is not sufficiently in the lead.

Claude King once outlined the need for standard English to me by narrating his experience as a British actor who had toured the provinces. Provinces in his terms included anything from the North of England to Australia, Africa and Japan. "The provincial audience," he said, "insists on hearing the standard theatre pronunciation of London and New York. They want Cockney, Irish and 'accent' only in character, and they resent dialectic pronunciation in straight parts as earmarks of a cheap company."

That argument, good at the time, does not wear off as its application comes nearer home. The provincial audience, in actor language, is any audience outside the theatrical centers, New York and London, and its demand is always the same, straight English in straight parts—Little Theatre included.

Oliver Hinsdell of the Little Theatre of Dallas might be expected to stress the point as a personal preference. Down at the editorial office of the Dallas News, the dramatic editor wiggled in his chair talking about it.

"We like our southern-western Texas dialect around the house and in the office, but we can't stand it in the theatre."

I never heard more plans for speech improvement than were going on in this office, the dramatic editor and the secretary of the theatre putting their heads together to prepare the radio workshop and diction prizes. The workshop had engaged its teacher of speech and money for the prizes was ready in hand.

"You'll hear Southern dialect," said Mr. Hinsdell before the opening performance of *The Play's the Thing*. "Make allowance for Mr. ————. You'll hear things in his speech but you've no idea what he's overcome."

I already had an idea, for a visit to several schools had brought to light a number of the things that have to be overcome in rehearsing a Texas cast. Every teacher has a linguistic story to tell, usually about a vowel substitution in familiar words. The favorite story of one teacher is how "I was formerly a farmer," becomes "I was farmerly a former." There is the boy who says the telephone operator had her "weres" crossed, meaning her "wires," and there is the woman who is "tah'd from ahnin," meaning "tired from ironing." "Mini min" and "ini enk" is a form of pronunciation that has somewhat frazzled the patience of Mr. Hinsdell and worn on the nerves of Mr. Clark, professor of music at the State College in Canyon. "Mini min" is identified in Texas as "many men" and "ini enk" as "any ink." In a state bulletin called *Common Sense in Singing* Professor Clark calls Texas' attention to the fact that "drink" is not "drenk" and "eyes" has one syllable.

With these preliminaries and warnings as to what Mr. ———— may have had to overcome, the curtain went up on *The Play's the Thing*. As the play unfolded, act by act, the words of Claude King came back to my ears.

I found myself in the Little Theatre of Dallas, at this "hub of the whole Southwest, involving twelve million people." The diction of the actors was so delocalized that placing them geographically was mostly guesswork. In the best companies in New York it is often difficult to tell an American actor from an Englishman and so it was in Dallas. Inquiry after the play revealed that two members of the cast hailed from outside of Texas, a New Yorker and an Englishman. A stranger in the audience would have no cause to single out the Englishman as an importation. A detective might have discovered a New York "city accent" in the "firm" and "first" of one speaker in contrast to any other, and occasionally he probably would notice the o-sound of the juvenile, as suggesting

Texas speech, firm lipped and sonorous. But occasional tags of this sort were entirely over-shadowed in the ensemble of a diction that came as near to standard as one is likely to hear except in the most carefully chosen companies on Broadway. There were no "mini min" and no "farmerly a former" pronunciations. In the "doubtful words" on the contrary, *ah* had the same preference it has in the pronunciation of Walter Hampden and Mrs. Fiske: *ah* in "advantage, after, ask, bath, castle, chance, glasses, granted, last, pass, rather."

This is evidence in itself that actors of the Dallas Theatre cultivate the same consciousness of speech that professional actors cultivate until English without an accent and somewhat above the common level is as easy as anything. After six years of audience-actor education the diction in Dallas runs pretty smoothly. How this development has reacted as self-education on audience and actor is interesting. When the theatre was cutting its teeth, if a local boy stepped onto the stage on an opening night and said *ah* in "can't" the audience laughed. But audience and actor have grown up since then. The boy expects to say ah in "can't" long before he joins the company, perhaps says it at home now, the audience expects to hear it, and the reviewer has his pencil out if the standard is forgotten.

The "aesthetic distance" between the audience and actor has reached a point of stability. Both audience and actor are depersonalized so far as Texas is concerned. The audience goes to see the play and the actor goes to his dressing-room to leave his personality behind the door. There is no amateur hero worship in any part of the house. This depersonalization of the individual explains the havoc done to local dialect in a theatre where audience and actor have arrived at the level of artistic appreciation.

Good diction is a matter of box office satisfaction. After six years of hard work on the part of the directors, the work shop has been revived with its teacher of speech so that new candidates may be prepared for public approval. The Little Theatre of Denison had its teacher of speech ahead of Dallas.

In the production *R. U. R.* Mr. Hinsdell broke the tradition of having a tin mirror or a soaped mirror on the stage. He took the mirror out of its frame, back and all, and set the bureau with its empty top back to the audience close down to the footlights. Of

course, the audience liked the empty frame in this position. What does an audience care about a mirror with a back on it? They want the facial expression of the character acting before the mirror. With the bureau down front to bring the character close, and with the mirror out of the frame, the audience could see through. By aid of a little imagination this was the best mirror ever put on exhibition.

So it is with speech at the Dallas Theatre. It is a mirror. What we expect to see in the mirror is the inmost personality of a character, even the secrets of his soul. If a real mirror faces the footlights it will reflect electric bulbs and the dust around them, if it faces the wings it will catch the janitor in his over-alls. If you soap it, it bears the rhythm of a propertyman, and if you make it of tin, it is brazen. So out with the mirror altogether and meet the character face to face.

Local dialects have the faults of a glass mirror with reflections on the side of irrelevant detail. English can be English and language without soap or fingerprints. That type of English is called pure because you can see through it, and standard because people like it, people as varied as those in a theatre audience. Correcting stage diction is therefore a matter of throwing out soap and tin plate and even the too familiar mercury that catches more of reality than fits the frame.

The speech pattern of the Dallas Theatre, as it has been observed by an intelligent audience, discussed in dramatic reviews, and set off in favorable and unfavorable contrasts in little theatre tournaments, has become something to be desired. The idea has taken possession of sixty-eight or more theatre groups and of a still greater number of teachers and students. No one objects to working on pronunciation when preparing a part, and this in itself has often led to the conclusion that too much dialect is a bit provincial. Step by step the individual reaches a middle ground from which he views both his native habits of speech and a type of pronunciation that not only appeals to his ear but gives him a growing sense of personal liberation.

At the Normal School at Denton, only an hour's ride from Dallas, three hundred copies of *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* by Daniel Jones are used as text books by students of speech. The great advantage of the *Pronouncing Dictionary* is its use of the phonetic alphabet. Webster has usually said the same thing but

with the obscuration of diacritical marks which are conveniently interpreted to fit a preconceived idea. The phonetic alphabet is a revelation regarding actual sounds. Their first incentive to study diction, no doubt, was a desire to have the school play up to the standard of the Dallas Theatre presentations. But the "aesthetic distance" in speech does not stop here. The influence of the play and the teacher is gradually being supplemented by the will of the student who finds that he prefers the standard form of English pronounciation to the localized speech. This same interest is evident at the Teacher's College in Canyon, where the music department publishes special bulletins stressing diction in the text of a song, and at the Technological College in Lubbock where both the English and the philosophy department and even the president himself are cooperating in speech. With such influence in a school, and with play-production, diction classes and two thousand students, it is obvious that the speech movement is no longer a theory but an expression. The Little Theatres in Texas are a very vital influence in this general trend. They have learned that the use of the standard English diction has a practical value since it affects favorably the box office returns. Somewhere back of this fact is a public taste for a standard of speech that is not local. The theatre brings this taste into open expression. It begins to assert itself wherever there is a potential audience and a potential actor. The next step is inevitable. As this type of speech becomes more familiar the speech itself comes more into daily use.

And why should it not be so? With the professional stage short circuited by electrical loud speakers, the Little Theatre steps into the gap to do the speech job better, for the Little Theatre, as a resident company, has a power for educational leadership, more palpable to the audience than that of the professional actor.

Beggar on Horseback *at the University of Michigan.*

To Whom Shall the Little Theatres Look For Criticism?

TWENTY years in the small theatre have brought me a sprinkling of grey hairs and a fair amount of success. I've met the storms of the early years when the cry of the artist and stage designer was all for futurism. I've succeeded in outliving the one-act play enthusiast. I've worked indefatigably to convince the embryo actor that it is a ten year job to become proficient. I've prodded, cajoled, and bullied the native playwright into turning out his masterpieces. I've struggled with real estate men and financiers and community lodges to build a pile of brick and mortar that one could call a home. I've lived through every phase of the evolution of the Little Theatre but one—and that one is the addition of adequate criticism.

It seems to be the accepted policy to have some pretty pictures, taken by an expensive photographer, spread far and wide over the land, and by this method to rise or fall as a capable producer. It is indeed a lamentable state of affairs if a "pretty picture" is the *sine qua non* of dramatic criticism. It is ironic that the Little Theatre must employ a picture technique to demonstrate its worth. I had thought that the day was past when stage sets and lighting spelled the whole word in the theatre.

I recently saw some marvelous illustrations depicting the settings for one of our standard contemporary dramas. They were modern and fantastic and had all the qualities of line, balance and mass that one could hope for. But I began to wonder how the actors got along with their material under the power of the settings. I wired a friend in the vicinity of the company and asked him to see the production. He praised the setting, the lighting and its manipulation, but said that the actors, using a technique of realism such as the play bound them to, were at all times at sword's point with their background.

I think it behooves us who are so close to our work—immersed in it is a more accurate phrase—to begin to think about where our criticism is coming from. How am I to know whether to respect the Little Theatres of the south and the west and the east? Or, how are they to know how well I do my work? To whom shall we look for a strict evaluation of our efforts?

BURTON W. JAMES,
Director, Seattle Repertory Playhouse.

[The need of the Tributary Theatres for adequate criticism is probably second today only to the need for adequate and inspiring plays. Having done their work as well as they can, how are they going to know how well that is, measured by any common aesthetic standard?

Of the two forms of criticism, the interested and the disinterested, the interested is often available; that is, it is possible for a director to get from his audience an intelligent and at the same time understanding judgment of his achievement in relation to his intentions and his opportunities. He may say to them "Given my limitations of equipment, of talent, of money, how successfully have I made use of my resources?" But that form of criticism, valuable as it is, is not an aesthetic judgment. What the director needs to ask is, "How good is this play, this acting, this direction, making no allowances?" The only person who can tell him that, with

Poster design by Lynn Ford

any satisfaction to him, is the trained dramatic critic with experience and standards on which to base his judgment. And professional dramatic criticism, unfortunately, does not come in answer to a need alone. A dramatic critic will attend plays and write of them only in response to an audience for his criticism when it appears in writing in his newspaper or magazine. In other words, the fact that a theatre needs appraisal or publicity will not bring criticism; the fact that it has an audience that reads criticism, will. Meanwhile, pictures do what they can to tell their tenth of the tale.—*Editor's Note.*]

The Theatre of the Small College

ONE of the obvious advantages of a small college is that it affords an opportunity for the students and teachers to know each other. The student benefits by closer contact with his source of intellectual stimulation. To many teachers the relationship may be of doubtful benefit, but to the instructor in dramatics it is invaluable.

The Masquers, the undergraduate dramatic association of Amherst College, recently gathered some interesting statistics in regard to the personnel of its audiences. It was shown that 61 per cent of the persons attending the second performance of the season were students of the college; 21 per cent were members of the faculty, and the remaining 18 per cent were persons outside the college. Almost one-half the total enrollment of the college was present at the performances. It may be safe to assume that the majority of these students had been prepared through courses in the drama for the reception of the play, and, if the assumption is correct, here should be found the nearest to the perfect audience, trained through academic courses for an appreciative understanding of the play. Other students, not included in the number above, participated in the production as scene-shifters, property men, electricians, et cetera, and were supplied with more specific information relative to the technical aspects of the production.

The training of this ideal audience is a task too great for the dramatic department alone. The cooperation of such contiguous departments as those in English literature, history, modern languages, psychology, philosophy and speech is necessary. If this is accomplished, the theatre in the small college will be well on its way to becoming the meeting place of the arts (and sciences!) in fact as well as theory.

Such a relationship between the theatre and the classroom is distasteful to those who believe that art and education are incompatible, that the delicate soul of the theatre shivers and dies before the icy breath of the academician. One can see little to warrant such a belief, provided the theatre in question is devoting its attention to solid and significant plays and not languishing in the doubtful delights of bohemianism and obscurantism. An institution which survived the formidable Italian pedants of the 16th century and the worst of the didactic neo-classicists in the first half of the seventeenth century in France has little to fear from the comparatively mild scholars of the modern period. A theatre as an adjunct of an institution of learning must justify its existence as a cultural force in the college community; its function is to be instructive rather than entertaining, educational rather than in-

spirational. It must not diffuse its energies to the detriment of its audience by using its stage as a proving ground for amateur playwrights. The greatest good for the greatest number is a principle which loses none of its effectiveness when applied to things of the theatre. And the greatest number is to be found in the audience. This theatre of the small college should be last of all a place for amusement and relaxation. Surely the student of the present day needs, and wants, as much serious artistic and intellectual stimulation as can be directed at him. He may go elsewhere than to the college theatre to have a good laugh, or to enjoy the exploitation of some big personality. He should come to this theatre not to forget himself but to remember himself.

It is the first duty of the director to see that his audience is given the best that the drama can offer. All other considerations are secondary. Better to have a good play adequately done than a poor one done excellently. The play, not the actor or stage-manager, is the thing by which this theatre must stand or fall.

The selection of the play should be solely in the hands of the director, and not in those of a student play-reading committee, since mature judgment and a sense of historical perspective in the drama are needed. The plays should not be chosen singly. If we insist on purpose and design in the plays themselves, an effort should be made to give a whole season's program a purpose and design of its own. The director should see the year's work as an entity, whether three or thirty plays constitute his program. The more skilful and purposeful the choice of the plays, the more lasting benefit to the audience.

The three plays given by the Masquers this year were satires, chosen from different countries and different periods in dramatic history. Each presented a different problem: *Beggar on Horseback* by Kaufman and Connelly, *The Wild Duck* by Henrik Ibsen, and *The Playboy of the Western World* by John M. Synge. The various forms of satire are apparent. The first play, with its rapid changes of scene, appealed primarily as a theatrical spectacle. It depended largely for its success on the ingenuity of the scene-designer and the speed of the stage management. In *The Wild Duck* the burden shifted from the stage force to the actor because the play's success depended on his ability to present the ethical problem embodied in the play with clarity and force. The play is intellectual rather than spectacular. Finally, *The Playboy of the Western World* added the problem of mastering a difficult idiom. It is primarily a play of language, noteworthy for the richness and vigor of its speech. It comes close to giving back to the theatre the "sovereignty of words," and the actors' task, speaking beautifully, is one of the hardest known to the theatre.

CURTIS CANFIELD,
Director,
Amherst College Masquers.

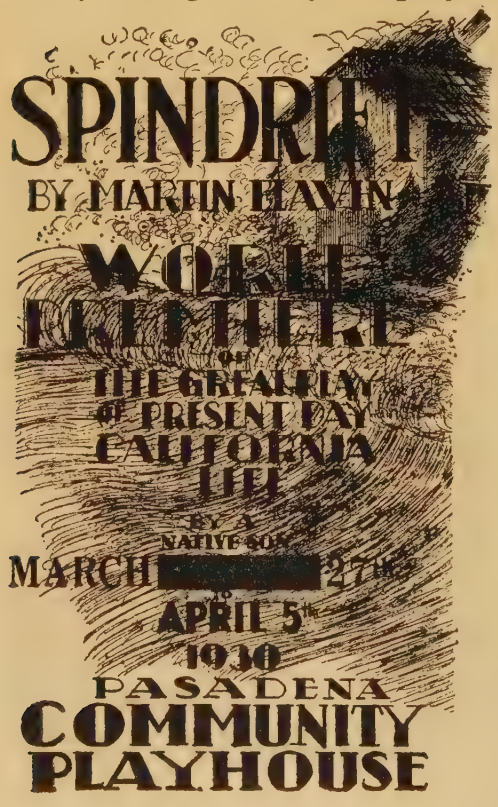
The Tournament as a Workshop

THE organization of tournaments goes on apace developing new forms and new values as it goes. The Arkansas Theatre Association, one of the pioneers in state organization, has progressed to the point of having its own three-act play tournament this year with the first place won by the Theatre of Little Rock with *Tiger Rose,* second place by the State Agricultural and Mechanical College of Magnolia, with *Sun-Up.* If other states would follow the lead of Arkansas and if Arkan-

Poster design for Escape, *Omaha Community Playhouse*

sas would take one more step forward and advance to the production of original three-act plays, we should have, in our regional theatre associations, the basis for the development and exchange of original plays. The Carolina Playmakers continue their tours and tournaments with success; the Palmetto Players of Columbia, South Carolina, have started on their way through their state; the Westchester County Drama Association has grown into its own home; Colorado is holding its sixth annual state tournament, et cetera. But it has remained for the Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania to conceive a plan by which a local tournament shall be made to serve the needs of the local theatre itself. The way it is done is described in this letter:

"One cannot be interested in any Little Theatre organization for very long before the need of supplemental laboratory work becomes obvious. In most groups this appears to be an impossible hurdle. So much work is essential to make the major productions competent that there is a danger of wearing out on extra curricular activity. The goal of any new group is obvious. Win the support of the community. Increase membership and revenue. Obtain a paid director, and then build a theatre.



"But this is a hard road to travel. All productions must be good, and an audience must like them. It goes without saying that you cannot compromise by the production of sure fire plays without merit, just to accomplish this end, but you must select plays carefully. And success depends on an ever increasing number of talented participants.

"Each year we conduct try-outs, at which a great number of applicants present themselves. But our opportunity of testing them is extremely limited. A laboratory theatre is the answer, but how? Once or twice we have cast untested persons on the basis of their avowed experience and ability to read intelligently, but we have usually had cause to regret it. We are fighting for a foothold. Plenty of time later for experimenting, and we dare not now risk experimenting ourselves out of existence.

"We have found the solution to be in an annual one-act play tournament to which all local dramatic groups are eligible. It is surprising how many groups there are. As a matter of fact the tournament has brought several organizations into existence. Church groups, dramatic departments of Women's Clubs, social dramatic societies, et cetera. We have never had less than five entries in this annual event, and interest is mounting.

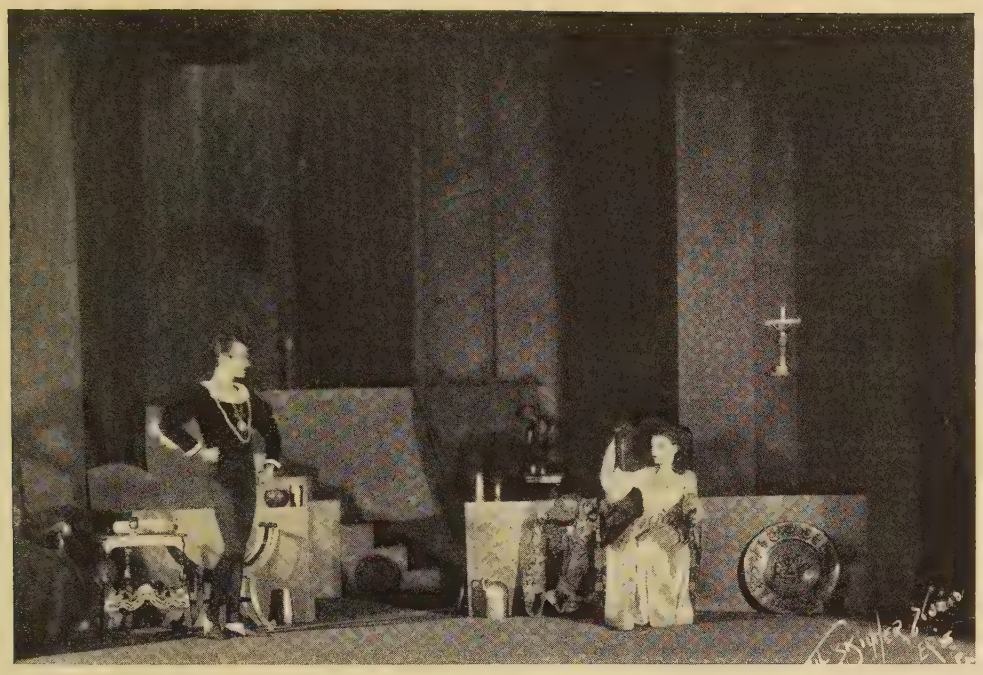
"The rules of the tournament are simple. The results have been concrete. This year about 75 persons registered at try-outs. We were able to refer them to the various groups participating in the tournament who are always on the look-out for new material. At the tournament itself we are able to gauge the calibre of the material, and each year we have discovered a half dozen talented persons hitherto unknown to us. We have thus created something tantamount to a laboratory theatre with a minimum expenditure of energy on our part. It has proved a most practical expedient.

"The Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre pays all the expenses of the tournament, including royalties, and exacts no entrance fee from the participating groups. We see nothing of the plays until the night of the dress rehearsal, when each group has the

Little Theatre snapshots. Above: The Scalawags (children's group) of the Town Theatre, Columbia, produces *Cinderella,* dramatized and directed by Harry Davis; the Portland (Washington) Civic Theatre produces *Spring Sluicing* by Alice Henson Ernst. Below: Marian Cheney in *The Wife of Jonak,* at the University of Washington, in Seattle; the Smith College Players in *The Player Queen,* directed by Samuel A. Eliot, Jr.

John S. Neary

Plays of early American life. Dallas Little Theatre's production of Shaw's *Devil's Disciple* under the direction of Oliver Hinsdell. A scene from Charles F. Neidlinger's *The First Lady of the Land*, at State Teachers College, Trenton, Effie Georgina Kuhn, director.



Above: A scene from the Erie (Pennsylvania) Playhouse production of Edwin Justus Mayer's *The Firebrand,* directed by Henry B. Vincent; settings by Chase Adams. Below: The Amherst College Masquers in *The Wild Duck,* directed by Curtis Canfield.

In the colleges, Shakespeare knows no national bounds. Above are shown a Canadian Hamlet from the University of Western Ontario, an American French Queen in the Carnegie Institute of Technology production of *Love's Labour's Lost*. The Hawaiian Viola (left) appeared in the University of Hawaii's production of *Twelfth Night* whose cast included American, British, Chinese, Hawaiian, Japanese and Dutch players.

stage for one hour, and our stage manager is the czar. The interest of the groups has spread interest in the Little Theatre throughout the community, we get splendid publicity in the newspapers, and our next major production usually contains several new faces."

BERNARD F. BURGUNDER,
President, The Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre.

Theatre in Adult Education?

AMONG the most interesting answers which have come in to Dr. Alvin Johnson's query as to what form a theatre should take in a school for adult education and who should direct and teach it is one from Robert de Lany, student in a school of the theatre, who says: "Choose teachers who can surrender their time and energy to the school—rather than those who seek financial aid to support other interests. Choose those who are tolerant of youth's conceit; those who can inspire and guide this conceit without wounding the underlying goodness that has perhaps created it." And another from the Department of Adult Education of San Bernardino Valley Union Junior College.

"Adults, almost as much as children, need the freeing of their personalities through creative expression. The daily contacts of modern life force the individual into such set grooves of feeling and conduct that the intrinsic distinctiveness of his being is all but smothered; any medium which gives full play to creative individualism is a valuable asset in the development of the whole person and in complete living. The arts of the theatre furnish this medium in a variety of ways. The interpretation of roles, the arts of design as applied in costume and stage settings, the arranging of properties, the creation of lighting effects all stimulate the imagination toward creative expression. Even so prosaic a task as the business management of a production may offer an avenue for freedom. These positive values make imperative the inclusion of opportunities in play presentation in any scheme for Adult Education. There are many schools which provide training for the professional worker in the theatre, but such a training for the amateur would carry quite a different emphasis.

Teachers for such a course in the theatre as a social force would be artists in their particular fields, but foremost, sympathetic, vivid, living beings who sense completely that life is a greater art than poetry, music, dance, or design; that to live fully is a more beautiful achievement than to paint a scene or write a play. While engrossed with the means, they would never confuse those means with the ultimate aim, nor would they ever suffer those under their tutelage to make such a confusion."

TEMPE E. ALLISON

News Notes

Not so much what plays are produced as what plays are successful is the measure of the Little Theatre and its audience. A survey of the programs and records gives some surprising and perplexing results. For example, the Cornell Dramatic Club reports that the greatest box office successes in its ten productions were *Journey's End* and *Ten Nights in a Barroom,* with a considerable margin in favor of the *Barroom.*—The Shin Tsukiji Gekidan or New Tsukiji Players, whose production of Maxim Gorki's *Mother* is illustrated on page 543 have made up their year's program with three Japanese plays, added to *The Death of Rasputin* and *All Quiet on the Western Front.*—The Friendly House Players of Davenport, Iowa, a settlement organization, are reported to be the only ambassadors of the living theatre in a district including over 100,000 people, including Rock Island and Moline, Illinois. *Lombardi, Ltd.* was their biggest success both artistically and financially.—The University of Washington at Seattle has made progress in combining music with its Dramatic Department. Students in the workshop have supplied the costumes and sets and directed the lighting for the spring opera *Robin Hood;* a dance drama, *Dierdre of the Sorrows;* Federation Concerts and the Glee Club tours.—A certain Little Theatre in a certain big town reports a carefully cast production of the *Merchant of Venice* with a note that "this Shakespearean piece done a handsome business for a week with one extra added matinee thrown in" and puts a curious accent on the announcement by this note: "The Civic Theatre is an all professional group."

THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

THE AMATEUR RECORD

Footlights Across America, by Kenneth Macgowan. Harcourt Brace: New York. $3.75.

IN the short time since its publication a few months ago, Kenneth Macgowan's *Footlights Across America* has become the established record of amateur dramatic activities all over the country. A chapter from the book appeared in THEATRE ARTS in advance of publication. Its records and conclusions have been at various times material for editorial comment. But the book is of such a special character in its relation to the Little Theatre Movement and will be used so often for fact-finding and for reference that it seems well to include a more formal survey of it here.

The book was undertaken at the instance of the Association for Adult Education and the Carnegie Corporation. The coast to coast trip which Mr. Macgowan made to secure his material was intended as a survey of the progress which is being made in American drama as that progress is indicated in the work of Little Theatres, the school and college workshops. All of this against the background of the European predecessors of the American theatre.

Mr. Macgowan divides his book into four general parts—the first a history of theatrical conditions in Europe and America, the desire for creative experiment on the one hand, the killing economic waste on the other, especially on Broadway, which led up to the flood of dramatic life now usually lumped under the name of the Little Theatre Movement. "The artistic dangers of Broadway," says Mr. Macgowan, "are as obvious as the economic ones. There are limits to even such a Mob-art as the theatre. Its essence must be an appeal to many thousands, but if economic conditions force it or tempt it to appeal to millions as the price of existence, then its art will suffer." Part Two is a study of drama in education with special emphasis on the University Theatres, their problems and achievements, the various methods of theatrical pedagogy employed in different parts of the country and the spreading out through wider fields of the graduates of college drama departments. The gradual growth of theatre workers and theatre audiences through the high schools and the development of folk play making are further emphasized. What might seem to be the most important aspect of the movement, the aesthetic progress, is so varied and so little static that, as a part of this record, it takes second place in relation to the economics of amateur work and the problems of organization, all of which Mr. Macgowan considers in detail and analyzes from facts and figures placed at his disposal by the Little Theatres themselves.

"The history of the successful Little Theatre," says Mr. Macgowan, "is a progress from amateurism to professionalism. The professionalism of the local theatre should come through the hiring of its most skilful amateur actors on a seasonal basis. From such material the best ensemble is to be built. The amateur actor is better educated than the professional, he has learned better ideals, he is familiar with the methods and purposes of his theatre and lends himself more completely to the finished ensemble which such a theatre should make its ideal."

THEATRE MEMORIES

Memories That Live, by S. Morgan-Powell. Macmillan: N. Y. $3.50.

WHEN Mr. Morgan-Powell took to writing dramatic criticisms instead of plays, the theatre lost an artist of the first rank. In a volume which he calls

Stage designs by Robert Tyler Lee, student, for Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Die Versunkene Glocke,* presented by the Department of German of the University of California at Los Angeles.

A design by Lester Lang for the Gloucester School of the Little Theatre production of Tchekov's *The Sea Gull.* Below: A setting for *Hell Bent fer Heaven* as produced by the Shaker Village Players of Cleveland, Ohio.

Memories That Live, this Canadian critic has packed material for a half-dozen plays into the half-dozen short chapters which precede his study of *The Theatre, Looking Backward.* If *Into the Depths,* subtitled *Exit from Africa,* is less a drama than O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape,* it is only because it is told in story form. Situation, character development, the quick taut dialogue, the black climax, are all a playwright's achievement. *Castro the Cattleman* and the *Spirit of the Sphinx* are *dramatis personae* alive on the page—almost as much alive as that spirit of old France whom he calls Yvette Guilbert or the Russian Mystery, who goes by the name of Alla Nazimova.

Mr. Morgan-Powell sees his theatre as a background for great personalities and if he calls each one of his great folk the greatest of his kind, it is only because he is able to isolate the special mystery or variety, charm or power or majesty which characterizes the art of Duse, Bernhardt, Henry Irving and distinguishes each of them in turn from Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Herbert Tree, Mrs. Pat Campbell and the other artists who make his calendar.

Memories That Live is a book which people who love the theatre may be counted upon to enjoy, which even the people of the theatre themselves—who so seldom read anything that concerns them except the head-lines of the morning after—may well read with pleasure.

Reminiscences

The Life and Reminiscences of Jessie Bond, the Old Savoyard. John Lane: London. Bar and Buskin, being Memories of Life, Law and the Theatre, by Edward F. Spence, K.C. Elkin Mathews and Marrot: London.

HERE two honest folk tell their tale of life, which happens also to be a tale of the theatre. Jessie Bond was so famous a Savoyard that when she walked into the theatre at a performance of *Ruddigore,* thirty years after her retirement from Gilbert and Sullivan opera, all the house rose to cheer her. Mr. E. F. Spence, for thirty years a practising dramatic critic and at the same time a practising lawyer and King's Counsel, stood less manifestly in the public eye, being professionally the observer rather than the observed; but his record covers much the same generation on the legitimate stage. Miss Bond writes cheerfully of W. S. Gilbert, Santley, Wyndham, and Edward VII as Prince of Wales, the last of whom she kept pretty well in his place; and on the other hand Mr. Spence remembers the Independent Theatre of J. T. Grein, the early plays of Bernard Shaw, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray,* and many other things beside the half-bottle of burgundy that he has always very wisely drunk at dinner and the legal fees that he has very sensibly banked as insurance against the perils of too much preoccupation with art and letters.

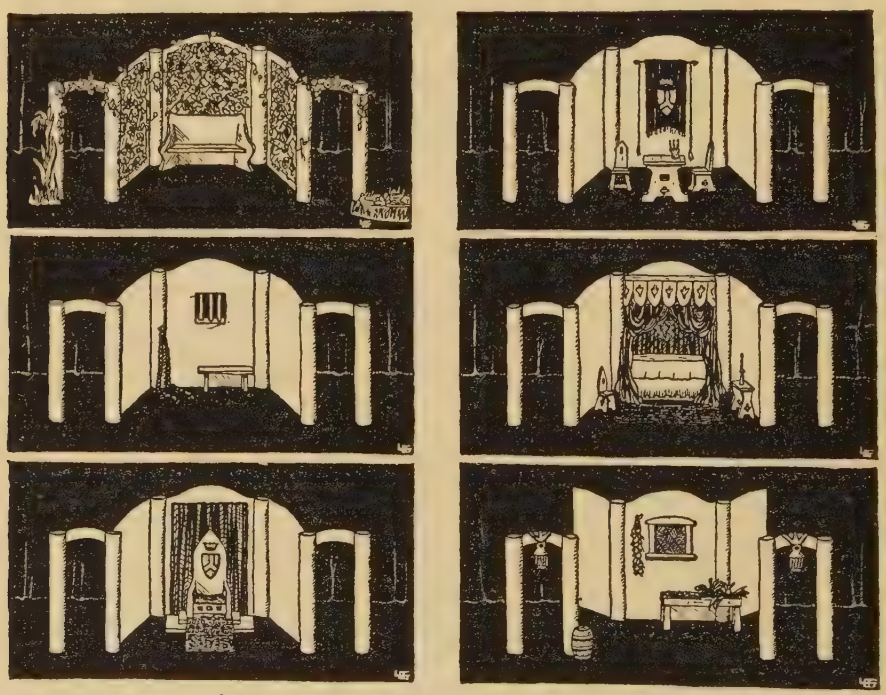
The tale in each case is interesting because the writers have personality and achievement behind them. And Mr. Spence adds to his good-humoured narrative itself a special style in telling it which recreates a whole leisurely period of social and theatrical history.

Other New Books

The Switchback, The Pardoner's Tale, The Sunlight Sonata, three plays by James McBridie. Constable: London. Smith: N. Y. $2.50.

ALL of these plays are clever, but just now there is so much cleverness in the world that they would easily pass unnoticed, save for the depth and biting ironic quality of Mr. Bridie's third piece, *The Sunlight Sonata.* This play will not make him popular with the book-reviewers who direct the destinies of publishing, nor will it enchant the play-reviewers, who are too busy seeing worthless pieces every night to read a piece of real merit. Observing that it is partly written in rhyming verse, and that it includes not only modern characters but Beelzebub and the Seven Deadly Sins, they will surely glance at it and pass on. Let us beg them earnestly to reconsider that decision. The play has passed the test of performance. It was produced by the Scottish National Players on March 20th, 1928, at the Lyric Theatre, Glasgow (would that we had been there!) and it is nothing short of scandalous that it does not appear in the current playbills of every repertory theatre where original English drama is valued. All this we venture to

say without any knowledge of Mr. James Bridie, who for all we know may be a Russian or a Pole—except that his name sounds something Scottish and if he were an inhabitant of Central or Eastern Europe he would by this time be celebrated in Britain as an ironist. Read his play if you cannot see it; read it with that ironic fury it seeks to engender; and be thankful that some minds at any rate escape the deadening influence of the discussion drama and retain the divine gift of presentation.



A unit set for Edna St. Vincent Millay's The Lamp and The Bell *designed by Laurence Goodrich, produced by the seniors of East Orange High School.*

Bühnentechnik der Gegenwart, by Friedrich Kranich. R. Oldenbourg: Munich and Berlin. B. Westermann Co., Inc.: N. Y. 2 vols. $12.00 a vol.

THERE will be a few in the audience listening to the Wagner operas at Bayreuth this Summer, enjoying *Tristan and Isolde* with Toscanini conducting, or *Parsifal* with Muck, few even of those who notice the special architectural and mechanical adaption of the Festspielhaus to the productions made under its roof who will notice the skill with which the whole technique of production is handled there. Friedrich Kranich, who is technical director of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus and of the State Theatres in Hanover, is one of the world's masters in his field. The machinery of the theatre is valuable to him only as it simplifies the work of the designer and director; the work of the designer and director important only as it perfects the production of a play or opera. But there is no detail of theatre building, equipment, management of the light, the handling of machinery, which seems unimportant to him or with which he is unfamiliar.

His *Bühnentechnik der Gegenwart* is ample evidence of this. Anyone who reads German will be well repaid by a serious study of this important work. Anyone who reads pictures will find enough of value in the four hundred illustrations of its first

volume to make a serious perusal of the book worth while. Plans of theatres, architectural working drawings, designs of theatre mechanics as a whole and in detail, illustrations of every form of stage, as well as scores of photographs of important performances are included in this record. The second volume, dealing especially with lighting equipment, signals, safety devices, et cetera, is announced for immediate publication.

Memoirs of Lorenzo Da Ponte. Translated by Elizabeth Abbott. J. B. Lippincott: Philadelphia. $5.

THE fascinating life story of one of the most picturesque figures in theatrical-musical history is in these *Memoirs,* first published more than a century ago, while the author was living in New York, a lively factor in the cultural life of the New World, and far from the scenes of his youth. Born at Ceneda, near Venice, of Jewish parents, Da Ponte, early in life, assumed the name of the prelate who baptized the family and was patron to this gifted boy, later to become Court poet at Hapsburg, friend and comrade of Casanova, librettist of three of the best of Mozart's operas, impressario in London and elsewhere, tradesman, bookseller and teacher of Italian in America. Overshadowing in importance all other claims to posterity's attention is Da Ponte's role as librettist for *Figaro, Don Giovanni,* and *Cosi fan Tutti.* He, himself, with characteristic *sang froid,* states that "it was to my perseverance and firmness *alone* that Europe, and the world in great part, owe the exquisite vocal compositions of that admirable genius" which "the unfairness and envy of journalists, gazetters and especially of biographers of Mozart have never permitted them to concede." The fascination of the *Memoirs* lies less in the actual narrative of events than in the glimpses—at times tantalizingly faint—of the rich and ever-varying contacts which Da Ponte enjoyed, leaving to the imagination an immense treasure trove of speculation and research. The reader is continually struck by the purposeful selection of material indicating Da Ponte's pre-occupation with his struggles and intrigues, social and artistic; and there are comparatively few references to the brilliant and dramatic events of his kaleidoscopic career.

Mr. Livingston's notes and introduction hint at what still lies behind the scenes, and in his volume on Da Ponte in America, shortly to be published, much more of interest may be revealed, at least as to the latter third of Da Ponte's life, which was almost as full and adventurous as his younger years. This part, too, has the added attraction for American readers of being caught in the web of the cultural life of America at an early and formative period; Da Ponte enjoying the friendship of such prominent persons as Clement C. Moore, the Livingstons, Duers, Ver Plancks, Andersons and others of the élite of the day. By a curious twist of fate, in spite of these contacts, he shares with Mozart the distinction of burial in an unmarked and unknown grave.

The Bright World, And Other Poems, by Charles Norman. New York. $2.00.

THE nostalgic melancholy of youth and its bright-armored enthusiasms find poignant expression in *The Bright World.* No American poet has a finer feeling for Elizabethan blank verse—sound, imagery, unity, continuity. Charles Norman is a fitting descendant of the great poets whom he honors as his masters.

The poems in this collection fall into two categories, those on classic themes in the classic manner and those of modern life. As a poet of "The Bright World" about him, Mr. Norman is able to fuse contemporary images into the sentimental manner without incongruity, as in the following lines from *Preludes:*

"Into the twilight of New York, the twilight
troubled by a hurdy-gurdy and odor of flowers,
aware of flower-pots on window sills
and window-shades half drawn, and Rooms To Let,
the evening blossoming as I strode,
the Elevated rumbling in the sky:
into the bulging twilight on sad streets
I went, aware of the world's loneliness.
and people in whose eyes was sweet desire
and grief that weeps because it knows not why,
and all of these in garrets of despair."

This is the sort of thing he does again and again and with varying success in the first part of his book. It marks him as an exceptionally well-equipped poet of today, with sensitivity and with an honest imagery. In the classical poems of the last section of the volume, however, he has brought to modern verse a note that it has heard but few times and faintly since the days of Marlowe and Shakespeare. While these poems are rather uneven in merit there are passages in them of sounding power and great beauty. Here are the final lines from *Solomon:*

"For Solomon planned a temple unto God
Wrought with the substances of every land;
And caravans set out with cavalry
To barter in bazaars for ornaments.
It was to be so skilfully upwrought,
So magically fashioned with rapt hands,
That all the stones would tingle as with song,

. . . . .

And now the king grew young again with thoughts
Of foreign lords embarking for the north,

. . . . .

And in the dusk upon Jerusalem,
He dreamed of that fair queen whose name was Sheba,
Knowing she would assuredly arrive.

These poems are stronger and finer than those in which, to use Mr. Norman's phrase, "The newsboys rout the larks." They are dramatic in situation and in sound. Should the happy time ever come when America may realize the vision which some citizens have dreamed, a Poet's Theatre, it does not seem vain to prophecy that Charles Norman will be one of our native poets represented on that stage.

Beyond This Point, by Lance Sieveking and Francis Bruguière. Duckworth: London. 15s.

FROM the day when Francis Bruguière left New York for an extended visit abroad, the theatre has been the poorer. His photographs made a living record of ten vital years in New York. Most of the productions designed by Norman-Bel Geddes, Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson, Herman Rosse, live today only in the photographs made of them. The pictures he took were not a reproduction of what he saw, but, as he said, of his "inner convictions about what he saw," and by that conviction they became art in their own right. During the two or three years before he went abroad, when life in the theatre was fairly barren, Mr. Bruguière developed some abstract photographs which completed his right to the title of artist in photography. We have been, therefore, eagerly awaiting his return to our shores. And now for the first time he comes, in strange company. *Beyond This Point* is an experiment—or purports to be—in emotional writing, in which the pictures and the text supplement each other, a photograph taking up the narrative at the point where words become inadequate and leaving it when the words have, so to speak, caught their breath. In this way the authors portray a variety of reactions to fundamental human experiences: the approach to death, jealousy, ruin, suicide. The result of it all, however, reminds one of what Copeau used to say about good acting: "To be really creative, one must be more than sincere, on must be capable."

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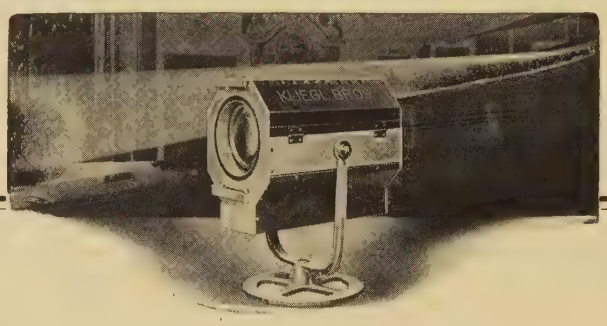

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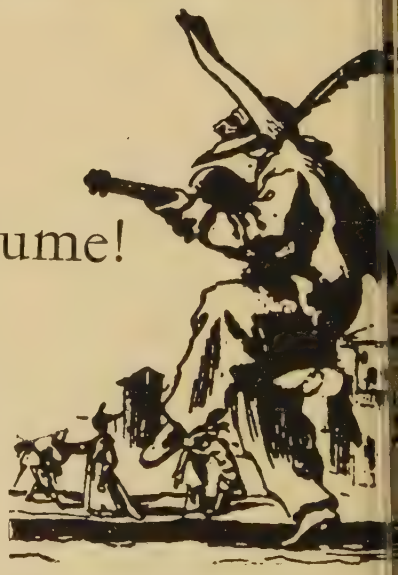

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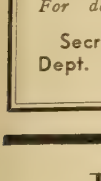

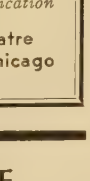

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PAUL ROBESON IN OTHELLO

The American Negro actor plays Shakespeare's Moor in Maurice Browne's London production.

The WORLD and the THEATRE

The Savants' Theatre—Claudel's Opera—Summer Theatres—The Cleveland Playhouse

THEATRE ARTS is happy to announce that a dozen of the most distinguished artists in England—poets, novelists, painters—are contributing to the magazine a series of articles, each under the title *I Look at the Theatre.* The list includes J. B. Priestly, Compton Mackenzie, Rose Macaulay, Middleton Murray, C. R. W. Nevinson—the painter—Naomi Mitchison, Edmund Blunden, Ellen Wilkinson, Paul Nash and others. No one can boast that he knows with certainty "what the public wants." By the word *public* users of the phrase have generally meant the audience of the unintelligent, said to be vaster by far than any other. That there is a public intelligent and sensitive, and large enough to make worthy theatrical productions highly profitable commercially, seems to have been proved of late by the successes of *The Green Pastures, Lysistrata, Othello* (in London) and other plays of permanent value. Representative of that audience are these artists whose opinions and ideas of the theatre are to appear in THEATRE ARTS. Their articles may

Old print. Italian Canonization Festival

The Lord Chamberlain, official censor of the drama in England, has banned presentation in London of Marc Connelly's *The Green Pastures,* Pulitzer prize play for 1929-30. This fact seems ironic enough when it is recalled that English drama began in simple, reverent miracle plays not unlike this one and containing many of the same characters.

•

England is not the only country harassed by censorship, however. The Hungarian ministry has forbidden the performance in Vienna of Walter Hasenclever's *Marriages Are Made in Heaven* on the grounds that the play is blasphemous. Nevertheless, Vienna has been having an interesting season which has included performances of Hoffmannsthal's *Oedipus,* Burgtheater; *The Dreyfus Affair,* Deutsches Volkstheater; and *Roar China,* New Vienna Theatre.

Hell's Angels may have startled the world weeks before this issue comes from the press. It may still be in the process of startling, or it may have come into its own and left the world of the film and its followers as unstartled as before. In any case this news note, copied from one of New York's most distinguished journals, will still be interesting for its story of mind and manners of Hollywood. It is headed "Howard Hughes' Costly Film." It says that, "Undoubtedly the man of the moment in Hollywood is Howard Hughes, whose $4,000,000 *Hell's Angels* is slated for its world première within a week. This young producer, who has been steadily at work on his war epic for upward of three years, regardless of expense, delay or disaster, has determined on a première which he expects will startle the motion picture colony to its very depths. Sid Grauman has been entrusted with the grand opening, and he has made plans for a most gala affair. Eleven dollars a seat is being asked for this première, a scale of prices that only New York has hitherto indulged in, and the surrounding sky is to be kept alive with a fleet of planes charged to the gunwales with colored bombs. No one, save Mr. Hughes and a trusty henchman or two, has seen *Hell's Angels* in its entirety and utmost secrecy and suspense prevail. During recent midnight previews at the Chinese Theatre, Mr. Hughes has sat in lonely state as his costly film has been unfolded to him. Hand torches have sprayed the dark recesses between the aisles in order that no 'peeping Tom' may carry advance reports to a waiting world."

•

The Board of Education of the City of Detroit recently passed unanimously a resolution in support of the Detroit Civic Theatre directed by Jessie Bonstelle. Among the clauses of the resolution was the following statement: "Whereas: investigations show that less than 10% of children of school age have seen living actors upon an actual stage."

cast a light on "what the public wants"; the public that has no sympathy with the vulgarity which, a few producers have assured us, the masses cry for. There is surely some producer somewhere who has a free and vigorous imagination, and who may be interested in knowing what that public really wants.

Columbus petitions Claudel to be allowed to visit America. (Berlin Tageblatt.)

PAUL CLAUDEL, whatever his great service to the cause of international politics, will always remain to theatre people an ambassador to the world's theatre. His *Tidings Brought to Mary* has been played all over the world. *The Hostage* is only a little less well known. This year he comes to the stage with a new work, a grand opera for which he has done the book to a musical score by Darius Milhaud. The work was first performed in Berlin at the Staatsoper unter den Linden under the direction of Franz Ludwig Hoerth. Although the critics are not enthusiastic about either the book or the music the production attracted unusual attention.

THE WORLD AND THE THEATRE

THE woods are full of summer theatres this year, with new ones continually being added to the list. At Stockbridge, F. Cowles Strickland and Alexander Kirkland are renewing their season, producing good plays, old and new, with players seasoned and in the making. The Wharf Players at Provincetown go on again as they have for years. Walter Hartwig brings his Manhattan Theatre Colony from Peterboro to a bigger and better theatre at Bristol, Connecticut. Leighton Rollins continues the Surry Playhouse in Maine. Alfred Lovejoy, formerly of Seattle, now of the Cambridge School of the Drama, inaugurates a new theatre at the Westchester Civic Center. Someone is building a new Playhouse for the experimental group at Millwood under the direction of Arthur Sircom. At Skowhegan, Maine; at Southampton; at Woodstock, and so on and on, the groups grow. Many of them will act as try-out agencies for professional producers. Most of them will have a series of worthwhile plays in repertory. Many of them will help to pay their expenses and to build up their future companies by having schools or players' workshops, of one kind or another, associated with them. New York is not the only section in which these summer theatres are located. As far west as Ann Arbor, Michigan, Robert Henderson has for seasons headed a professional company and has this year inaugurated what he hopes to make an annual festival. Margaret Anglin as Antigone was the guest star for his opening production.

Shakespeare enthusiasts are rejoicing over Henry Clay Folger's bequest of approximately ten million dollars for building and maintenance at Washington, D. C. of the Folger Shakespeare Memorial to house the donor's famous collection of Shakespeareana.

●

It is said that Bernard Shaw has completed a new war play. The war of which he writes, however, is dated A. D. 2030. The second act is said to show a battle as fought at that date.

Bobby Clark in Strike Up the Band

Vassily Kouchita, former director of the Georgian National Theatre in Tiflis and later collaborator in Paris with Gemier and Pitoieff, has been engaged by the American Laboratory Theatre as guest director for the summer season at Byrdcliffe Theatre in Woodstock, New York.

According to the London *Observer,* George Moore has completed a new play *The Passing of the Essenes* founded upon an incident in the *Brook Kerith.* Jesus, Paul and Timothy are among the characters. The play will be produced privately at the Arts Theatre group in London where it will be free from the depredations of the censor.

•

J. Ajalbert, most French of Frenchmen, has published a new edition of his novel *La Tournee* which gives, under a thin cover, a fairly good record of the old days at the Théâtre Libre, its founders and players. In the dedication to Antoine the author says, "In memory of a time when Paris, from Montmartre to Montparnasse, was still for the Parisians and the French." Maurice Martin Du Gard, in *Les Nouvelles Literaires,* says it is easy to discover Antoine under the name of Vernal; in Jacques Remy, Brieux; Frédy Desrozes, Suzanne Despres, and so on. Among the characters of the book he finds most of the players in Antoine's distinguished company and, however romantic the record that has been made of them, he holds it a well worthwhile picture of one pioneer theatre that has made theatre history.

•

The Shakespeare summer festival at Stratford-on-Avon includes in its schedule another performance of *Othello* with Wilfred Walter as Othello and George Hayes as Iago and Miss Joyce Bland as Desdemona. The other plays of the schedule include *Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing, Romeo and Juliet, Midsummer Night's Dream, Julius Caesar, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Hamlet, The Tempest, King Richard II,* and *Macbeth.* And Gerald Lawrence, English actor, recently initiated a scheduled six-weeks series of Shakespeare performances at The Embassy, Swiss Cottage, with *The Merchant of Venice.* Other plays on this program included *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet.*

EVERY foreign magazine that touches the theatre in any way is full of Meierhold and his visit. *Querschnitt* publishes an analysis of Meierhold's handling of masses by Franz Spielhagen which has been much recopied. "With Meierhold," says Spielhagen, "it is like everything and everybody else that one meets in Russia. They are not as they are pictured in Europe. In Berlin Meierhold is supposed to be an improved Piscator, a purely technical director, a hater of form. Meierhold, however, defines himself as a fanatic about reality. He says: 'If our theatre is not more interesting than the Soviet it has lost its reason for existence'."

"Suppose one sees *Roar China,*" continues Spielhagen. "Technically the scene could not be simpler. The mass scenes are the greatest surprise of the evening. German directors take pains in the ensembles to create a simple unity on the stage, a likeness in appearance, in movement, in speech. Meierhold creates a unified effect out of a heterogeneous variety. Every man in the mass bears his own image, his own individuality, without display, but arrestingly. Behind these many faces stands the compelling will of the director who creates a personality out of the hundreds of separate human beings, a personality actuated by the same political or social idea. In this mass there are no two people alike. The evidences of their everyday life remain in them. Their unity is a spiritual one. That is Meierhold's secret."

ANTON TCHEKOV

New York's favorite dramatist of the 1929 season.

HAMLET AT THE OLD VIC

Hamlet and Ophelia (played by John Gielgud and Adele Dixon) in this season's "Old Vic" production. This photograph, made by a process known only to the photographer, Armand Console, was taken from the auditorium during the performance of the play.

THE WORLD AND THE THEATRE

THE New York *Times,* counting up the season's failures and successes in the theatre, invited letters from some of the larger theatre centres through the country including Cleveland, and the answering report speaks of the Cleveland Playhouse, its varied and successful productions, its increasing audience, et cetera, as pacemaker for the city. Now that the Playhouse has grown into a complete modern theatre, with a large stage, an experimental stage and a tiny proscenium for marionettes, and because it can pay actors out of its income, can hold a subscription audience for a repertory which the director chooses, can afford to pay high royalties for good plays, it is rendered the doubtful honor of brotherhood by producers, play brokers, et cetera. The truth is that there never was a more completely amateur theatre than the Cleveland Playhouse unless it was the Moscow Art Theatre. There were never actors more entirely amateur in their approach than the Clevelanders, however professional in their training. Frederick McConnell, the director, has had not one but dozens of offers for work in the New York trade theatre. So far, he has scorned them. But if he ever should produce for Al Wood with Jed Harris as stage manager, he would still be an amateur. And to know what that means is to study and understand the record of the Cleveland Playhouse from its first days in a packing box, and also to know that some day we will again divide the theatre not into professional and amateur but into amateur and trade.

The first Soviet Union Olympiad of the Theatre will be held in Moscow this summer. It is expected that over a thousand artists, representing the various state theatres of Russia, the cinema, music and the ballet will be represented. Fourteen of the largest nationalities composing the Soviet union are already scheduled. A special feature of the Olympiad will be the recording of the productions and demonstrations by tone films. These will then be made the basis of theatre archives, organized by the theatrical section of the Communist Academy to pass on to the future the speech, movement and gesture of the greatest actors and directors of this age and the best moments of the best plays.

A plan to begin certain performances at seven o'clock one night a week during the New York theatre season has been worked out by Frank Gillmore, president of the Actors' Equity Association. A number of producers including Lee Shubert and the Theatre Guild have already announced their intention of trying the plan in the autumn. Mr. Gillmore believes that adoption of this suggestion will accommodate the vast number of theatre goers who live in the suburbs by enabling them "to leave the theatre by nine-thirty o'clock, catch early trains and be in bed by eleven."

The apparently ill-fated Théâtre Pigalle "the most perfectly equipped theatre in the world" seems at last to have caught its stride with the production of *L'Orange* under the directorship of Tairoff, the Russian director of the Kamerny theatre. Tairoff, it would seem, is better able to make use of the equipment of the theatre than any director to date.

German dramatists are continuing their interest in biography. Among recent German productions have been Frank Wedekind's *Bismarck,* Heinz Steguweit's *St. Helena,* and Hanns Johst's *Prophets,* a play based upon the life of Martin Luther.

THE ENGLISH SCENE

Europe in London

By Ashley Dukes

THREE of four Hamlets and an Othello enter the lists as champions of the theatre against the invasion of merchandized drama. Shakespeare is the immediate and obvious answer to the talkie. One does not need to be a theatre manager to think of that; the man in the street and the reader of the newspaper have thought of it for two years past. Just as the author's word and the actor's presence and the form and colour and movement of the theatrical scene were always the answer to the silent film, so the poet's word and the actor's presence and the form and colour and movement of the theatrical scene are the answer to the sound-film of the present and the radiotelevision of the future and all the perfected and perfectible devices of mechanized transmission. Grant that a new art has been brought into being through the physical medium of film; grant every claim that is made by the writers of so live and vigorous a journal as *Close-Up;* grant also that a still newer art will be brought into being through the physical medium of visual broadcast; grant that "montage" and all the technique of film presentation will be transformed out of knowledge by each forward step of invention; grant in a word every claim of existing motion photography and every possibility of its widening horizons, and still theatre remains theatre; it stands by its claim to be the sole original vehicle of dramatic performance.

It is good therefore to see managers who understand these matters joining together to seize the popular imagination by presenting the emblem of Shakespeare, and actors coming forward to measure themselves against the stature of classic parts. For once the circumstances help to remove Shakespeare from the sphere of literary drama. For once the public does not set about the task (generally approached with so much misgiving) of seeing masterpieces from a sense of duty. The reading of them is for

the moment forgotten, because the moment itself is so auspicious for seeing them afresh and examining their purely theatrical importance.

This freshness of approach goes so far, I think, that the spectator of a Shakespearean drama in London today no longer asks himself whether the performance comes up to his own conception of Shakespeare, whether it is or is not a good expression of a dramatist's will. Rather he asks himself whether the modern theatre, using the subject-matter and medium of Elizabethan drama, has or has not a place in the world of art and imagination. He is willing to make allowance for the increasing remoteness of Elizabethan concepts. He knows this remoteness has become vastly greater in the course of the last generation. He hears it openly said that Shakespeare means nothing any longer, save as lyrical and rhetorical poet. That criticism also he is willing to examine with an open mind. If Shakespeare in the theatre does not satisfy him, he is not going to condemn either Shakespeare or the theatre on that account. But he goes to the performance with enough traditional sense to believe that a good choice is being made in the play of the evening; and that being accepted, he settles down to listen to the language of the theatre itself as the work is interpreted by the company.

From this point of view, what is the impression made by *Othello* as presented by Maurice Browne at the Savoy, with Paul Robeson as the Moor, Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona, Maurice Browne himself as Iago, and Ellen Van Volkenburg as director? Complete unity of direction would surely be a miracle with such a cast, for however faithfully they are resolved to serve the play they must pull different ways by force of necessity. Robeson brings to his part the special and sensational appeal of a Negro actor; he brings also a noble voice, a tremendous presence, and an infinite simplicity that is of the elemental forests and not at all of the world of Renaissance Europe as seen through the mind of Stratford. He brings an infinite humility too; and that must detract from the rank and prestige of the man Othello, who will never lose an audience's affection from having his own share of vanity. The Desdemona rings clear as a bell, but must needs appear too slight and youthful in the arms of this dark giant; and had she more of the pride of gentle breeding that Desdemona needs, we should see the greater lack of it in Othello. The Iago, as though aware

of these inevitable discords of emotion and taste, takes refuge in a completely intellectual drama of his own. It is well thought out, but wants the physical vitality, the mercury of the character that should run through every scene and leave no trace, and yet should run and glisten and poison the whole. Excellent in her way is the Emilia (Sybil Thorndike), who can play her fellows off the stage with a more disarming modesty than any other woman. This is an *Othello* of many acting talents, and scarcely of one.

The Pryde designs and Sheringham costumes were not altogether adapted to the Savoy, which since its late reconstruction offers too gaudy a frame for such work. And in a praiseworthy effort to avoid competing with this frame, they were underlighted. Further, the Savoy being a house with a broad orchestral pit that apparently cannot be converted into an apron stage, the scenes for the most part were played too far from the audience. The convention of steps grows tiresome when it removes the actor at each ascent into a new dimension of distance. This *Othello* was seen by many cultivated playgoers who had never seen the play before. I imagine their general verdict to be an open one; both Shakespeare and the theatre derive credit from the production, and both Shakespeare and the theatre can do better. Always we know that a tremendous thing has been attempted.

The Old Vic *Hamlet* of 1930, with John Gielgud, was touched upon last month. Brought to the Queen's Theatre, again by Maurice Browne's enterprise, it reminds us of the strange vivifying or deadening effect an audience can have on a performance. *Hamlet* being one of the most amusing of plays, as well as the most tragic, the audience of the Waterloo-Road laughed heartily at a hundred of its lines and was throughout the performance in that state of rapt response which springs from knowledge of the play and the players and the tradition of the theatre which makes it certain that *Hamlet* will be played in April and May of 2030 or 3030 for that matter, on Thames-side, in the spirit of today and yesterday. Why should the "West End" public be so altogether lifeless by comparison, even when the theatre is as well filled and to all appearance filled by as eager spectators? It cannot be that all the audience of the Old Vic are personally acquainted with each other, while all the audience of the Queen's are strangers. But somehow the Old Vic never manages to transport itself completely, smell of coffee and all, into the confines of Shaftesbury

OTHELLO

Sybil Thorndyke as Emilia and Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona, supporting Paul Robeson in Maurice Browne's London production.

OTHELLO

Another scene from the recent London production. Maurice Browne, director, is seen as Iago at the extreme left of the picture.

OTHELLO

Maurice Browne as Iago and Paul Robeson as Othello

OTHELLO

Design by James Pryde, the well-known English painter, for *Othello* as presented in London by Maurice Browne with Paul Robeson in the title role.

Avenue. Not that the actual performance suffers; John Gielgud's Hamlet ripens with acquaintance, Martita Hunt brings warmth and thought to the Queen, and Donald Wolfit makes the King a Tudor gentleman, in whom lust and murder are attributes that cannot diminish our liking for him.

Alexander Moissi too plays *Hamlet* in London, this time thanks to Charles B. Cochran and Maurice Browne together, but he opens his season with *Der Lebende Leichnam* of Tolstoi, the stock piece that he finds most successful. It is not a bad play, as stock pieces go; indeed it could be claimed as a forerunner of all the middle-European dramas in ten scenes that are being written at the present day. Moissi, however, has been playing it too often (some 1400 performances are claimed for him in all countries) and he certainly plays it too easily. The really admirable feature of the London production was the direction, expressed not only in the team work of the company but in the swiftness and sureness of scenic movement. Some of us felt we had never seen a real "black-out" before; and all the complicated business of scene-shifting in darkness was accomplished in a few seconds, in a foreign theatre at a first performance, without a hitch. Of Moissi's Hamlet it is needless to say much at this time of day; that performance too, with all its sensitive expression, is weakened by the spirit of self-pity, and it wants the virility of thought that makes the great Hamlet. But Moissi remains the complete incarnation of the player element in the middle-European theatre. He is always *Schauspieler*; he lives in an imaginative world to which he gives himself with true abandonment; he has the conscience of an artist, he keeps faith with the world-spectator and does not think as so many players do of "my public" here or "my public" there; and above all he expresses the theatrical spirit of fresh creation in the spectator's presence, as opposed to the film-spirit of universal reproduction and shadow and echo of original performance.

This season it is hardly necessary for an Englishman to do any theatre-going abroad, for after Moissi come the Pitoëffs, Georges and Ludmilla, with their company from the Théâtre des Arts in Shaw's *Sainte Jeanne;* and after them again come the Japanese Players with Tokujiro Tsutsui in a repertory. And if there is no Russian Ballet season since Diaghilev's death, Karsavina gives a week of dancing of her own. Meanwhile the best of the Irish

Players who have made England their home, among them Sara Allgood and Arthur Sinclair, are joining in revivals of the Sean O'Casey plays. All that is lacking to complete the world picture is a visit from Tairoff of the Kamerny Theatre, who is in Paris at the time of writing, and a production of *The Green Pastures* which is much talked-of but unlikely to come about at present.

Meanwhile the London theatre itself produces the usual average of three plays a week, with at least the usual average of merit. A new organization called the Famous Players Guild has the shrewd idea of presenting leading actors in a series of plays in a group of theatres, and pooling profits and losses between them so that the policy shall be continuous. Each leading actor will have a share in the management, and in general the policy will be that of presenting "stars." So far, so good, but the "star" was never acceptable in the English theatre through his stellar nature alone. The merit of the old actor-manager, like Beerbohm Tree or George Alexander, was a merit of individual taste. The man was more discriminating than the rank and file of managers. Experience had taught him what plays to like as well as what parts to choose. Certainly the stability of his management allowed him to face an occasional failure with a smile; but his main asset was ability to choose a script and produce a play with distinction. The famous player of today, with a riskier experience behind him, often lacks this very judgment; and that is the chief obstacle the Famous Players Guild will have to face. Unless its actors choose their own plays it will be not better than any other theatrical gamble; and if they choose them, some early reverses must be looked for. But the Guild has made a hopeful beginning with Owen Nares in *The Last Chapter,* and its organization is all to the good.

Now something must be said of the smallest theatres in the midst of theatrical London, which employ professional players and are open nightly, but have no wish or pretension to compete with the larger entertainment world. The Gate Theatre Studio was the first of them, and when it moved several seasons ago to new premises under Charing Cross station it became the recognized home of the newest European and American drama. Artistically, Peter Godfrey's direction has held it together. The audience is faithful, and large enough to support each play for three or four weeks at least. Being a subscription audience it is of course highly

specialized, and it definitely expects its plays to be sensational. There is an intellectual Grand-Guignol spirit in the house; and though individuals among them would deny it, the members as a whole do not take the trouble to subscribe in order merely to see good plays; they require a real "kick" in order to get their money's worth. This inevitably means a search for stronger and stronger fare; and so the Gate eventually produces a stale German sensation like *Revolt In The Reformatory,* which has no relation either to the dramatic or theatrical movement of our time. It is hard to see in any case how the Gate can do much more for the theatrical movement, for its scenic possibilities are limited to lighting, and an audience crowded within a few feet of the players has not much hope of illusion. Nor is the present world-output of realist or satirical or sensational drama important enough to justify translation, and other forms of drama must needs be cramped or distorted to fit the frame. But the Gate has one great merit, its directors possess a sense of humour and they steer clear instinctively of ethics and aesthetics, the chief dangers of the pioneering theatre.

Ethics are the ruin of *The Searcher*, the opening play at the Grafton Theatre, which is more commodious than the Gate and looks theatrically more promising. The expressionist form of the piece is form and nothing more; the motive underlying it is Velona Pilcher's urge to speak her mind humanely, sincerely and passionately on the theme of the Great War and wars in general. The trouble is that nothing new is said, and nothing of a poetic content that can remotely justify scene after scene of dramatic heart-searching. The final justification of the whole, if there be one, is ethical; that is to say *The Searcher* approaches the stage from the same angle as the Shavian discussion-drama, with much less effect. The rest of the evening at the Grafton is given to vaudeville—"an unusual variety entertainment" as the playbill has it. Well, vaudeville is an art in which the English happily excel, and to please the English vaudeville must be done in a first-rate way and not in the spirit of cheerful amateurism that carries us through charades at home. This management has made a poor beginning, but it possesses an attractive little theatre of classical shape, with a turntable stage; it is licensed by the Lord Chamberlain and open to all comers; it has therefore the chance of being popular and good instead of unpopular and dull, and there is hope for the future if ethics are dropped once for all and nobody tries to

give expression to "the woman's point of view" or any kindred sentimental abstraction.

Still further removed from the everyday stage is the Hilda Spencer Watson Theatre, which aspires to new harmonies of voice, movement, dance and scene. One likes seeing people express themselves as these players express themselves—the thing in any case is rare. Visually the effect is always arresting, sometimes enchanting. Dramatically Hilda Spencer Watson has a gift for translating a tale into pantomime. Musically all is arranged and chosen and played or sung with distinction. It is the human voice that gives a tone of aesthetic over-emphasis, a challenging tone that robs every word of true simplicity. If these real pioneers would only forget their pioneering; if they would only forget their challenge to the theatre of everyday! Perhaps the artists of the Greenleaf Theatre are less forbidding in their aesthetics, but they are also much less ambitious and less finished in their execution, though they have a fine imagination behind them in Maxwell Armfield and a tireless producer in Constance Smedley. For the present both theatres inevitably form coteries and little more; but they are working with a sense of direction, which is more than can be said for most playhouses.

I LOOK AT THE THEATRE

By J. B. PRIESTLY

[Novelist, author of *The Good Companions*]

SOME men of letters are always boasting that they hardly ever enter a theatre. I am not one of them. I do not pretend to be a serious student of the theatre—my main interests are elsewhere—but I have been a steady playgoer ever since I was a schoolboy. I like the atmosphere of the playhouse, especially when the playhouse admits to a certain artificial gaiety and is rather pretty and absurd in gilt and coloured lights. Those bleak modern theatre interiors, suggesting a place for scientific lectures, repel me, and I believe that behind their austerities there is a mistaken idea of the theatre. I shall probably shock a good many readers of this excellent journal, but I must insist upon pointing out that the basis of the theatre is entertainment. Thus, a performance of *Hamlet* is superb entertainment; it may be many other things too, but first and foremost it is superb entertainment.

This does not mean that the theatre cannot be serious. It can offer us light entertainment and serious entertainment. The theatre here in England is far more successful with its light entertainment. I do not really prefer farces and revues to tragedies or what for want of a better name we must call "serious plays", but nevertheless I find myself going to see farces and revues far more often, for I certainly prefer a good farce or revue to a bad tragedy or serious play. The light theatrical entertainments are much better specimens of their kind. Thus, Mr. Tom Walls and Mr. Jack Hulbert have a command of their material and their art that makes the actor-manager-producers on the serious side of the profession look like mere bunglers. I will freely confess that the serious theatre lays tasks of much greater magnitude on its servants. But it is not for me to discuss the difficulties of the serious theatre, for my business in this article is to suggest what seem to me its failings. I have to explain why I, as a man of letters with normal tastes and a liking for the theatre, find myself preferring the lighter stage.

The fact is, the serious theatre is hardly ever really serious at

all, though many attempts have been made to compel it to be. I believe that most of these attempts, though often resulting in some interesting experiments in drama, have failed, and that they have failed because they have been based on a wrong conception of the theatre itself. Let us take, as an example, the great Shavian raid. Mr. Bernard Shaw, a man packed tight with ideas and wit, soon discovered, after yawning through long long sessions of "well-made plays", all about slightly absent-minded society beauties and adulterous diplomats, that the serious theatre was not at all serious, and he determined to show it how it could improve itself. He did it by putting the theatre through a course of higher education. A born debater himself, he turned it into a debating platform. The Shavian theatre was a place to which you went to hear a discussion about serious subjects. It was not unlike the leader-page of a very intelligent newspaper. Most of the young repertory dramatists followed his exciting and glamorous lead, so that there was a time when we were overwhelmed with plays about prostitution, the housing problem, the coal industry, trade unions, drainage schemes, and the like. The theatre began to look like a Fabian summer school, except that I believe that at Fabian summer schools there was more evidence of high spirits. People who protested against what they called "these problem plays" were dismissed as suburban ninnies. Yet I think that time, even though it left Mr. Shaw himself unscathed, protected as he has been by the armours of his wit and stage-craft, has proved that the ninnies were right, though they may have actually talked nonsense.

I have not the space to discuss adequately two more recent attempts to make the serious theatre really serious. The first, which has very little attraction for the English mind, is that of the Expressionists, who appear to throw away individual character altogether and concentrate on the spiritual adventures of block types of humanity. It belongs, I suspect, to those post-war "stunts" in art that were very amusing at first but have soon become trifling and tedious. The second attempt is perhaps hardly a movement, but rather a drift, and is connected in my mind with such dramatists as Mr. Ashley Dukes and Mr. Clifford Bax, who are trying to achieve that necessary seriousness by giving their plays the bloom and grace of good literature.

The modern theatre became entirely serious for me, something that could conjure beauty out of life, when I sat through my first

performance of *The Cherry Orchard.* Here, in this strange play about a group of idle and fantastic Russians, the thing was done. Here was life in all its abundance and richness, its pathos and humour, its terror and beauty. I realised that a modern play could do for me what a great many modern novels can do for me, what nearly all modern plays had refused to do. A play is one thing and a novel is quite another thing, and of that fact I am quite aware. But it does seem to me that the contemporary theatre has made up its mind rather too easily that it cannot do what fiction can do. By that I mean that there is in any good novel a certain rich thickness of life that is hardly ever found on the stage. What I like to find in a novel are character and atmosphere, that is, sharply delineated, memorable people moving about in a real world, a world filled with sunlight, moonlight, starlight, candle light, wind and weather, early mornings and late nights, gay fresh places, sinister places, musty interiors, living landscapes. Shakespeare is, of course, a master of atmosphere, and I have a private little theory that one half of his plays first came to him simply as certain characteristic atmospheres, such as that of the forest in *As You Like It* or the gloomy castle-and-heath of *Macbeth.* Again, in *The Cherry Orchard,* you cannot help feeling the arriving-late-at-night atmosphere of the first act or the all-packed-up-to-go-away-in-autumn atmosphere of the last act. And throughout this play, you feel you are in a certain definite place that exists somewhere, and not in some vague generalized theatre scene.

Most modern plays do not satisfy me, even though they may possibly entertain me for an hour or so, just because they have in them little sense of character and atmosphere. They are an affair of puppets moving in a vacuum. The situations in which their characters find themselves may be dramatic enough, but if these characters seem to you people made of cardboard, creatures who had no existence before the play began and will have none when it is over, it is difficult to take such situations very seriously. Moreover, the vacuum is disturbing. In life, everything happens *somewhere,* somewhere quite definite, unique. What a pleasure it is to be shown a place on the stage! Why did those two American plays, *Broadway* and *Porgy,* please so many of us here? As pieces of dramatic writing, they had no great merit, being both easy melodramas. But they had real atmosphere. In *Broadway* you felt you were actually behind the scenes in that cabaret and that it

really was very late at night; and in *Porgy* you felt you had really been taken somewhere, to Charleston. Scores and scores of characters from more intelligent plays that I have seen have completely faded from my memory, yet how well I remember the weary waiter in *Broadway,* the old hawker of crabs in *Porgy*! I am prepared now to book seats for a play that has no plot, no organised and developed action at all, so long as it has definite atmosphere and offers me a good thick slice of life. I want plays to suggest the rich thickness of life, instead of giving me a thin and hollow parody of it.

I admit that it is possible for a play to please simply by reason of its deliberate fine artificiality. Nobody could pretend that Congreve's comedies are like life. Last year, I saw the New York Theatre Guild's production, *Caprice,* and it remains in my memory as a most charming little thing. It was nothing but an ingenious trifle, dealing with a tiny world from which ninety-nine hundredths of the life we know had been removed, but the production had been contrived with such intelligence that the piece had unusual charm. This deliberate artificiality, this fine frugality, has its place in the serious theatre, and I would not banish it. But there are really very few plays that base their appeal on it. Most contemporary plays seem to me to be just the wrong thickness. Either they should be lighter and thinner, like *Caprice,* or they should be much thicker, with more of that rich suggestion of character and atmosphere which any fairly good novel can give you. I want to come out of the theatre, not feeling that I have been hocus-pocussed into being emotional for an hour about something that will be gone like smoke from my mind the next day, but feeling that I have just been given a great chunk of experience and that my memory has been correspondingly enriched. I want to feel that I have suddenly become intimate with some memorable folk and have discovered how life is really lived somewhere or other. Novels are always doing this for me. I hasten to agree that it is much harder for the dramatist to do it, but I think most dramatists do not even try.

They are too busy contriving unusual dramatic situations and working out ingenious schemes of action. This is not, to my mind, a serious business, though the contemporary theatre as a whole still regards it with intense seriousness. The dramatist slogs away, and then we discover that the young man's wife was once the mistress of his father or that the girl is arranging to marry her mother's former

lover or something of that sort; but if it is obvious to me that all these creatures have come out of a prompt copy and a make-up box and have no real existence outside the tiny lighted area of the stage, if they do not seem to be living anywhere but in the glare of the spotlights and against the painted canvas, I for one do not care a rap whether they have all been one another's lovers or whether they murder each other right and left. On the other hand, give me a real solid character, a person in whom I can take a definite interest, and I am prepared to spend happy hours following his fortunes, even though one of those astonishing dramatic situations is never once evolved. This is true for fiction, and I believe it is true for the theatre. The play of the "strong situation"—in which the judge always turned out to be father of the young man in the dock—is beginning to look very silly these days, but nevertheless it is still situation and action that are chiefly considered and character and atmosphere that are left to look after themselves.

It is a familiar dictum of the dramatic critics that plays made out of novels are poor things. Some of them have seemed to me to be much better than the most workmanlike efforts of professional dramatists, just because some suggestion of real character and atmosphere had been carried over from the original fiction. Time after time, I have read notices of plays that were blamed because "nothing happened" in some particular act, and I have seen the plays afterwards and discovered that those acts were easily the most satisfying, just because they gave me a rich sense of life. I have no objection to plays that are crammed with action and strong situations; they are melodrama; and melodrama can be great fun. It does not belong to the serious theatre, however. And it is not debates on questions of the day, nor is it symbolism or producer's antics, that will make the serious theatre entirely serious and satisfying. It is character and atmosphere. If anybody wishes to dismiss this view of the matter as the prejudiced view of the novelist, he or she is a liberty to do so; but I suspect that it means that *Hamlet* and *The Cherry Orchard* will have to be explained away too. We know, however, that Tchekov was a novelist. What about Shakespeare? Perhaps he was really a novelist too. He certainly spent a great deal of his time dramatizing what were virtually novels. Many of his plays have all the faults that we have been told so often are the faults of plays from novels. Fortunately they have all the virtues too.

IN CLASSIC THEATRES

Greek Theatres

By IRENE MAWER

THIS is an age of re-birth. A time when artists and poets turn instinctively to the great achievements of the past; not to reproduce the classic form, but by contemplation of the purity of artistic achievement, to find courage to express the needs of their own day. Thus some of us have turned again to Greece, where once drama, dance and theatre found their perfection amid ideal surroundings. It has just been my privilege with my partner, Ruby Ginner, to make a tour in Greece, with a company of forty-seven students and professionals.

We took our English girls to Greece to show the results of our training; we journeyed to the places of immemorial names to seek the spirit of the dramatic arts at a time when a theatre had an altar for its centre and when dancing was of the temples, of the vineyards, of the land itself. We were present at the Delphic Festival when *Prometheus* and *The Suppliants* of Aeschylus were performed in the Greek theatre above the temple of Apollo.

Our own work in Greece included one performance in the closed Theatre Olympia and one in the beautiful Greco-Roman Odéon Herodes Atticus, which lies below the Acropolis. The poverty of the equipment of the theatre Olympia, and the intense and concentrated interest of the audience were equally astounding to those who are used to at least adequate stage settings and appliances in a European capital, but at the same time resigned to the non-committal complaisance or boredom of a London audience. We played practically without scenery, yet to an audience, who, after the first enthusiastic burst of clapping, hushed down any attempt at applause, so intense was their desire to see and to appreciate what was, to them, a new art.

The Odéon Herodes Atticus seems small after viewing the theatres of Syracuse, Epidaurus or Corinth. Yet the actual dimensions of the orchestra or dancing ground prove nearly twice the size of those of a large London theatre. The plastic form as compared to the picture stage gives a sense of space and proportion which can-

Among the most interesting dramatic events of the summer season have been the revivals of the Greek dramas in the theatres in which they were doubtless played many centuries ago. These pictures show the theatre at Delphi: above, as set for *The Suppliant* of Aeschylus. (*Photograph by Ruby Ginner*) and below, during the performance of the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus (The chorus of Oceanides). (*Photograph by Nelly's Athens*)

EPIDAURUS

The circular Greek Theatre at Epidaurus lies within a circle of surrounding hills and mountain ranges. Acoustically it is the finest outdoor theatre in the world. (*Photograph by Ruby Ginner*)

not be achieved where the audience sees the performers from the line of rectagonal perspective only. Choruses given by a verse-speaking choir in these conditions have a sound value which it is impossible to attain with the acoustic properties of an enclosed theatre. The voices are magnified and yet supremely clear.

Before our view of the Delphic performances themselves we visited the theatres of Epidaurus, Corinth and Dionysus.

In Corinth the American School is still at work upon the theatre. The smaller Odéon lies completely cleared. But the theatre is still emerging from the overwhelming weight of the earth. It is fascinating to see the plan growing as the work increases. This theatre when it is completely excavated will perhaps be the most marvelous of all. The blue waters of the Gulf of Corinth lie on one side, the great stony hill of Acrocorinthus on the other. In the centre of the orchestra already stands the pure white marble altar, bearing the goats' heads and festoons of vine and grapes. There is no other example, I believe, of the exact proportion of the altar to the orchestra and theatre for which it was designed.

We were, then, prepared for a magnificent architectural conception before we reached Delphi. But there the position of the theatre is one of the most perfect things in the world. The elemental dramas of Æschylus had for their setting the mountains of Greece at their most austere. The great Rock of the Castalian Spring towers behind the audience; beyond the simply reconstructed stage the ground falls rapidly into a deep gorge, beyond which the mountains rise again. These mountains are the background of the play. The acoustic properties of the theatre are perfect. Every word spoken in the orchestra or on the raised stage resounded to every inflection while the magnificent voice of the player of Prometheus echoed back from the mountain adding an elemental force to his tortured words.

The performance of the *Prometheus* was an almost heroic achievement on the part of Eva Sikelianos, wife of Angelo Sikelianos, and with him, organizer of the Delphic Festival. The magnificent poem, spoken in modern Greek, was a perfect choice for the unique position and atmosphere of the theatre at Delphi.

It was inevitable, that a completely satisfactory production should prove beyond the scope of the band of inexperienced players who attempted it. But the performance of the anonymous Prometheus was a piece of pure artistry, and a demonstration of superb physical

and mental power. As his great voice poured out to the mountains, and his magnificent stature remained immovable, yet passionately suffering, throughout the play, we felt ourselves in the presence, not only of a master-actor, but of that power which should be the true heart of the drama of the world. A curiously unfinished and inexact attempt to make use of the masks and cothurni of the classic stage marred somewhat the other principal characters. The choruses of both plays were interesting in their study of classic positions, costume and movement. But exactitude of archaeological research had blinded the producer to the urgency for vital imagery, and the sweep of poetic passion in the great songs.

However, it is easier to criticize technical detail than to record the almost incredible inspiration of these great dramas in their rightful setting. Greek plays in English, given in some attempt at a reconstruction of a Greek theatre, tend to become a form of "pose." Bereft of the heart of their message, homeless in a strange land, and spoken in a foreign tongue, they are ghosts crying some message to endless generations who seldom understand.

Hellenic drama was the living voice of gods and men in the youth of the world.

The Hellenic theatre was a part of the earth, fashioned to catch sunlight or shade, to unite the human voice with the voice of the gods speaking in the thunder and the wind. When men began to build homes for drama in the grey north lands they laboured for many hundreds of years to beautify them. Sometimes we feel that they began to build her tomb in Rome, and have only been re-decorating it ever since. If we may not have, in this country of grey skies, and heavy non-resonant air, an open theatre, yet surely we may have one that is simple and spacious, one that seeks to unite audience and players alike with poetry, song and dance.

Agamemnon at Syracuse

By Bernhard Knollenberg

IT is my good fortune to have seen in the classic theatre at Syracuse, the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus. Across the open end of the amphitheatre rises the palace of Atriadae. It appears to be of red, unhewn timber, reminiscent of the ancient Norse temple at Trondjem. A wide and high flight of steps, stretches fan-wise from the doorway of the palace to the orchestra. Most of the action takes place on these steps. They are silver in color and look like a cascade bursting out of the narrow chasm of the door-

way. The tower on which the sentinel stands at the opening of the play rises high above the top of the amphitheatre. He has a magnificent voice and the lines in which, shortly after the opening of the play, he greets the flash of the beacon signalling the long-awaited fall of Troy, are most moving.

Moreover, the acoustics of the theatre are better than those of the Harvard Stadium or the open-air structures in which the Greek plays have been given in the United States. The few Italian words that I know ring out as clearly as do the familiar phrases in *Pagliacci* or *Bohème*. The undue dispersion of voices which has made American performances unsatisfactory is entirely absent.

The chorus is impressive. Unlike Greek choruses that have made their appearance in this country, these men look as if they are in truth men of Argos, elders of the State; not Bottom and his troupe come to enact the most tragical tale of Pyramus and Thisbe. Leaning on their staffs in solemn feebleness, these old men contribute materially to the atmosphere of irresistible tragedy.

The climax of the action is not, as might be supposed, the death-cry of Agamemnon, but the earlier moment when Clytemnestra, emerging from the Palace to receive Agamemnon, returning in triumph from fated Troy, orders her women to lay the purple carpet. These women participate in the entire action of the play. Dressed in mauve-colored mantles faced with silver, they are first a frieze against the right wing of the Palace, like figures on a Grecian urn. As the action progresses, they move slowly, widely spaced but in unison, towards the central cascade of steps. Their tragic gestures harmonize with and vitalize the solemn chanting of the chorus and the sinister prophecies of the captive Cassandra. Then having, by the laying of the fatal carpet, contributed to the final tragedy, they move swiftly and noiselessly away.

The view from the upper tiers of the amphitheatre is superb. Far to the north, the snow-covered cone of Mount Aetna towers above the intervening plains, dominating the picture like Fujiyama in a Hokusai print. Except for the converging gray lines of the railway tracks, the view from the theatre has probably changed but little since the days when Aeschylus directed his own plays there. The colored stucco of the one storied town, the sailing vessels in the shallow port, the ploughing oxen, the vagrant flocks of sheep and goats, peasants sickling their grain—have a timeless look. It is not until dusk, when the Midas finger of Edison, stretch-

ing to this ancient port, touches the windows of scattered villages with webs of golden light, that the modern world re-emerges.

The Festival at Delphi

By Dr. Erwin Felber

THERE were Pythian games and sports, torch races and high jumping, parades on horse and discus throwing. And there were productions of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *The Suppliants.* In both of these plays the heroes are entirely passive. Prometheus stands motionless in the chains that Hephaistos wrought; the Suppliants wait without any active participation for protection against the sons of Aegyptos who are seeking them to wive. So the dramatic burden falls, naturally, on the choruses which, with music and dance, carry the chief roles. At Delphi, this year, the entrance of the dance choirs was made over flights of stairs that flanked both sides of the narrow stage, downward into the half-round of the orchestra at the front of the amphitheatre of Apollo which is carved out of the mountain stone. Below the stage in *The Suppliants* was an altar, another reminder that this theatre was formerly a place of worship.

The music of Constantine Psachos, used for dance and song, even when it harked back to older Byzantine motives, was beautifully suited to represent the idyllic pastoral life of a shepherd people. At some moments it was perhaps too strongly influenced by the moderns—in the harmony, for example, which at times overpowered the simpler Greek unities in the use of the major and minor modes which falsified the old Greek modes; in the enlarged orchestra, the winds, percussion instruments, harps, et cetera, were used, instead of the two flutes which were all the music indicated for the drama in classic time.

The dances, which Madame Eva Sikelianos created after patterns from Greek vase drawings, breathed the classic spirit. The chorus of the fifty Suppliants was entirely Greek in its idea and interpretation. In certain details, however, as in the long wigs of the Egyptians in *The Suppliants* and in the gestures, the use of the arms, the legs, the fingers, there was a tendency to orientalize the movement. And sometimes, in the quick, angular movement, the rhythmic groupings of the women waiting for the word of Fate, were slight resemblances to Mary Wigman's school of dancing.

As a whole it was an art which, while it availed itself of elements from every possible source, managed somehow to unify them.

B. J. One

A group of British officers on the deck of a light cruiser at the battle of Jutland in the London production of Commander King Hall's play of the navy. (*Photograph by Stage Photo Company*)

The First Lord of the Admiralty in the London production of Commander King Hall's *B. J. One* learns of the opening of the battle of Jutland. (*Photograph by Stage Photo Company*)

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

By JOHN V. A. WEAVER

JUST six years ago tonight it was—
Not a hundred and six just six . . . that's all it was—
The night me and Dan announced we was engaged.
I was so happy, it was like bein' drunk!
Dan was so funny! Everybody said
I sure was lucky to get such a funny husband.
"Always a laugh a minute. Don't you worry
About bein' blue, no matter what troubles come.
Old Dan 'll laugh 'em off. Dan is a riot!"
That's what they said. . . . They didn't know the half.

That night he done a extra funny stunt.
Towards the end, when everybody was tired,
Why, Dan jumps up on top the dinin' table,
And scrouged down, waggin' his head from side to side,
And makin' groanin' noises, very loud,
Floppin' his arms, like flippers. . . . So then Bill,
His cousin, made like he was throwin' fish,
It was a reg'lar trained seal act, you see?
I laughed so hard I near had the hysterics.

That was the funny stunt I liked the best.
All that Dan ever had to do was make
That barkin' noise, and I would start in laughin'.

You know, when we got married three months later,
We was startin' down the aisle, under his breath
He made a little trained-seal squeak! Oh, my!
I got to gigglin' so I couldn't answer!
Wasn't that terrible? But it was cute.
It was my Dan, and I just loved him for it.
"We'll laugh our way along," I says to myself.

Of course, he had a plenty other tricks,
But that's the one that made me laugh the most.
It helped us through a lot, that bad first year,

Before Dan switched from the furniture factory
Into insurance, and got five more a week.
That made it so we got along heaps better,
Instead of really starvin' most of the time.
The night he come home, yellin' that he had it,
He was the loudest seal you ever heard!

The next to loudest was a year from then,
When he got five more raise. Oh, was we happy!

We figured it was all right to have a baby
Now that he got that raise . . . and so we did. . . .
I guess I'd rather I didn't talk about it.
She didn't live. . . . But here's the point, of course:
When I come back from the hospital, so weak
I couldn't hardly talk above a whisper,
And sad, and all . . . why, Dan wouldn't let me cry.
He says, "Why, that's all right, old lady! Say,
Next time you'll have the swellest kid there is!"
So while I'm layin' watchin' on the bed,
He does enough stunts to be a vaudeville show,
And Bill comes over, and they start right in
Doin' the seal. . . . And I quit cryin' to oncet! . . .
So, when my Frankie come, why naturally
We had the seal act after the christenin'. . . .
Frankie's the grandest boy in the whole world! . . .

But Dan didn't get any raise from that time on.
He worked real hard, but—I don't know what it was.
Either they didn't take him serious,
Or either he didn't know how to sell himself.
Anyways, it was the same old job and wages.
I scrimped and scraped and made things go, some ways.
Always hopin' he'd get a break real soon;
And always feelin' cheerful, account of Dan's jokes.

And then, six months ago, he got a hunch.
"You got to specialize!" that's what he says.
"I'm goin' to study to be an actuary."
He started goin' to night school right away,
And studied very hard. . . . It cut me down
On what I had to spend, but still I knew
That if he got the job he had his heart on,
We'd be on Easy Street. Why, we could move
Into the cutest little flat I seen,
That's twice as big as this, and you can use
The roof, those summer nights when it's so hot!

You see, Fred Mears is goin' to get promoted
To be assistant manager. And so
That makes a vacancy for section boss—
Sixty a week, with ten men under him.
So with the studyin' Dan has been doin',
And because he been with the comp'ny all these years,
And everybody says he's such a good mixer,
Why, it's a cinch that Dan will get the place.
Besides, Fred is the oldest friend we got,
And recommended Dan to all the bosses.
So Dan works like a dog, makin' a showin'. . . .

So then—tonight he comes home whoopin' and hollerin'.
He grabs me by the waist, and dances with me.
He says Fred talked to him this afternoon,
And tells him J. B. says the job's all set—
(J. B.'s the manager)—and Dan's to get it! . . .

Dan waltzes me around till I was dizzy.
Then he gets on the 'phone and calls up people,
Astin' them over for a little party
To celebrate a secret . . . so they come. . . .

And now the other room is stuffed with friends
Havin' the gayest time, and Dan's the gayest.
It isn't much of a secret any longer.
He takes 'em off in corners, and he whispers.
And he's so happy. . . . Oh, my God! So happy! . . .

I'm in the kitchen, dishin' out ice cream.
I'm happy, too. Then Fred comes walkin' in.
I take one look, and right away I know,
The way his face is, somethin's awful wrong.
"What is it, Fred?" I says, tremblin' all over.
"You got to tell me quick. I got to know!"
So then he hems and haws, and finally tells.
At half past three, he went to Dan and told him
It was all set, and Dan would get his place.
But it must be a secret till tomorrow.
Well, Dan gets all excited, keepin' it in.
And, then to closin' time, he jumps around,
Laughin' and cuttin' up. Fred doesn't like it,
But hates to call him down. . . . If he only had of! . . .

So this is what Fred got through tellin' me:
J. B., the boss himself, is in the toilet,
Twenty minutes to five. And in comes Dan,

Jokin' and tellin' stories to five others.
Twenty minutes they stay there—twenty minutes
Until it's closin' time. Yes, twenty minutes
Times six—that's an hour and a half Dan robbed the firm of.
That's the way J. B. put it, talkin' to Fred.
He don't say anything to Dan—oh, no!
He just goes sneakin' off to Fred and tells him.
It's all Dan's fault. He brought the others there.
J. B. is roarin'. Fred can't say a word.
What makes him sorest is a lot of jokes
Pokin' fun at the bosses, includin' J. B.—
Not real mean jokes, just razzin' 'em a little.
It's a long story, and ends up with the words,
"And that, my dear, is how I met your grandma."

And now J. B. won't let Dan have the job!
J. B. says anybody who will trifle
And make a monkey out of theirself like that
Can't handle men. He can stay where he is,
But hasn't got the makin's for a leader. . . .

Oh, God—after these years—his one big chance
All gone to pieces—he'll never get another!
And just because he can't help bein' jolly. . . .
Oh, damn the fool . . . oh, the poor thing, poor thing! . . .

Look at him now, standin' up on the table,
And Bill pretendin' to throw fishes at him!
Look at the silly idiot, bein' a seal,
So happy. . . . And pretty soon I got to tell him! . . .

I'm sick to my stomach, lookin' at him and listenin'.
There he goes now, makin' the barkin' noises.
Everybody is laughin' fit to kill. . . .
God, I wisht we was dead. . . . Poor little Dan. . . .
"Eeonk! Eeeonk!" . . . Poor little punk trained-seal! . . .

A GIFT FOR SAINT MARK

By Oliver La Farge

LONG before Spain swept the face of the earth with unreasonable conquest, in Guatemala as today in Arizona and New Mexico, one offered a dance as a tangible object to a god. To the new and powerful Christian gods the Mayan Indians brought their dances, partly naively, as worship, partly with deliberate intention to carry on a belovéd religion under the cloak of Christianity. Catholic priests, wise in human nature, and accustomed to the religious dances and carnivals of Spain, set out to further the first purpose and frustrate the second by rewriting the performances. They put an end to old symbols and insignia; blond wigs, the costumes of seventeenth century Spain, speeches in Spanish, the Christian language, had no association with the older gods. On Christian occasions only were the dances allowed to come out.

Through the centuries the tide of priests and conquest has been ebbing. Through the centuries, humbly, lovingly, wheedling like children, the Indians have been converting God, and His Son, and His saints. Behind the rampart of the Cuchumatanes Mountains in Guatemala, a Catholic priest who does not spare himself may manage to reach each of the larger villages once in a year; while he is there, God is a white man; for the rest of the time, impersonal, understanding, He comprises within Himself the whole pantheon of His creatures, the hills, the people, the corn, the old gods who are as essential to the whole as the very soil. His saints serve this new people in its own manner, as they serve us Europeans in ours.

This confusion was the subject of our deep interest, seeking, as we were, living survivals of the old religion. When the village of San Marcos invited us to attend their dance in honour of Saint Mark—a local, very powerful, and sometimes difficult, god—of course we accepted. The forms would be all Christian, we expected, but for the sake of thoroughness we should see it, and we were flattered by the invitation. Ultra-conservative, unanimously Indian, San Marcos is hostile to outsiders. The republican forms

of government, *alcalde, regidores, policia,* mayor, aldermen, police, have been adapted to fit an older religious autocracy; they want no foreign prying into why the mayor is always busy with incense, or why the popular elections so regularly confirm the choice of a few old men dressed in red and black. Travelers from our village had reported us to be *"naq tsak-an s-kuul,* men of clear hearts," that is, belonging by nature to those who may know the secret things, and so, unexpectedly, we were welcome.

The date when the dance should "come out" was pretty near Saint Mark's day, but it was just exactly Eight Ahau, which has been a sacred day for many centuries. On the afternoon before it, we rode through a sunless, narrow gorge overhung by a threatening jumble of steep mountains, and laboriously climbed to where the village nested in an encircled niche. Across the little plaza from the church, under the shade of huge trees as important to common weal as the tall, lean cross in front of the church, we were given quarters, and a policeman in the costume of a minor religious acolyte was assigned to care for our horses.

There was bad news, he told us. The little son of the Dance Captain had just been drowned in a brook. "It is mean, that brook, it is always trying to get people." Everyone was disturbed about it. The important prayers had to be held in the Dance Captain's house, and the boy was to have taken one of the women's parts in the dance.

We set about cooking supper. The sun had set, the little square was dusky, cool and peaceful. Then suddenly, to the left, there broke out an unearthly noise, and we saw a glow. From between the houses a procession swept into the plaza; many candles around a white bier borne shoulder high, a man with a guitar playing rapidly in a macabre cadence, and wailing women. They crossed the open almost at a run, circled about the cross, and continued on towards the burying ground outside the village. It was too fast, grotesque, and unpleasant.

Drum taps warned us that the ceremony was starting, and led us to the Dance Captain's house, a large one, its one room some thirty feet by twenty. Outside were gathered laymen; San Marcoseños and, to judge by the costumes, visitors from half the other villages of the highlands. At the door, we were admitted by an acolyte and assigned to seats.

Against the back wall was an altar, bowered with pine branches,

that brought down to the shadows in all the corners the darkness that hung like a reservoir under the thatched roof. On each side of the altar sat a "Good Man," high priests in black robes with small, red and white shawls, and headbands. Before them in a square, lighted around the edges with candles, lay the dance cos-

Indian Dance Figures drawn by Oliver La Farge.

tumes, a mass of dark colour, reds, blues, greens, yellows, dyed plumes, ornaments that flashed. A fire on each side was tended by a young man in white with a yellow sash. Religious officials of all sorts, Prayer Makers, Good Men, the Dance Teacher, Time Watchers, Soothsayers, and their servants, mostly in ceremonial black, sat all about. Against the right wall was the *marimba,* a sort of wooden xylophone played by five men, having a beautiful storm-in-trees-and-rushing-water quality, and capable of infinite volume.

Staring at one hand held rigidly before him, the elder Good Man

began praying in a rapid, high-pitched, monotonous recital, rising and falling with a curious concealed rhythm. He named whatever should be blessed, with amazing detail, and mingled in one appeal Saint Mark, the Twelve Apostles, the Virgin, Kanil, Ahau, the Year Bearers, Old Father, and the Four Corner Posts of the World. As soon as he ceased, the other priest began, the same tumbling out of words, the same quaver, the same formulae—a voice out of antiquity calling to the ancient things. By and by the men at the *marimba* started playing—a cataract of noise.

Something else, almost unheard, was running counter to the other sounds, insisting upon attention. At last one looked, beyond the screen of Prayer Makers, to the farthest left-hand corner. There around another fire were gathered the Dance Captain, his wife, and two or three relatives, carrying out in their own house, according to custom, the ritual wake following burial. It involved conscientious drinking, lamentation, and eventually, dancing.

Here and there people conversed. The Dance Teacher cheerfully explained points in the ceremony. A man picked up a votive candle, lit his cigarette, offered a light to a friend, and restored it to its place. The roof, the corners, the altar, under chairs, behind people, among the costumes, were shadows, thick and smoky, yet ruddier than the black robes. The dark faces, spots of red and white, the points of flame, accentuated a rich tapestry. The *marimba* crowded the room with noise, loud and throaty, through which wound steadily, thin and remote yet clear, the chanted prayers, and now and again, like something edged among many dull objects, the wail of the drowned boy's mother cut across everything.

About midnight the preliminaries ended. The dancers took their costumes and went to their own houses to dress. For a while yet, the *marimba* continued in the house, and the prayers never ceased. Now the mourners, following their own ritual, began to dance in the open space where the costumes had been. It was a sad affair, they were plainly drunk, and the simple steps were carried out heavily, without pleasure.

It was a relief when an acolyte announced that the dress rehearsal was ready, and we moved outside, priests, prayers, music, fires and all. A big square had been cleared, lit at the near end by a bonfire, and a torchbearer standing behind the Teacher's chair. Away from the fires, the place was full of a wavering, uncertain light from a half-moon behind thin clouds, which also showed,

beyond this place of noise, cool trees and silvered guardian mountains, as faint as illusion.

For one used to the satisfactory, barbaric adornments of Navajos, Hopis, and Pueblo Indians, the costumed dancers were silly and disappointing. Only the conventional yet realistic Mountain Lion and Jaguar, with crowned heads, had native quality. Two Deer, with *papier-maché* heads, were dressed like carnival kings, knee-breeches, lace, and radiant cloaks; they bobbed up and down constantly, idiotically, in traditional imitation of the motions of deer feeding. Monkeys with black and white, appealing faces wore military uniforms, suggesting unintended satire. Old Man and Old Woman, and a train of Hunters, in three-cornered hats, golden wigs and silly, pink-and-white masks, were the royalty of a pack of cards come to life, with a string of attendant Jacks. In and out among the others moved the women, very small boys elaborately gowned, not wearing masks, but featureless behind thin squares of cloth.

They spiralled, circled, wheeled, and marched in rectangular figures, all very formal, with a patter of tin rattles replacing the ancient gourds, and a jigging step, very much up and down, ungraceful. The *marimba* flooded out its unending, repetitious little tune, dinning at one's ears. In the dull firelight and faint moonshine absurd costumes ceased to be inappropriate, weaving in and out among themselves, with the crowding of shadows and music, the flash of jewels that were small mirrors, the stiff, set dance-step fitting the unreality of the masks.

Christian or not Christian, with Spanish costumes and machine-made rattles, they were acting the immeasurably ancient story of the magician who controlled the Deer. Five hundred years ago—and perhaps five thousand—they had offered this dance at the foot of painted pyramids that now are shapeless, grassy mounds at the far side of the village. They formed two parallel lines to announce in stilted Spanish that but few of them understood, how they were making "a solemn, Christian offering" to Saint Mark. Through it all, first one and then the other high priest continued his prayer.

The music poured forth again, the inter-weaving formations continued. Now out of the house, moving like a sleep walker, came the Dance Captain's wife, still absorbed in the ritual of mourning. There was dance music, and she danced, stepping into a tide of performers as though they were the shadows cast by trees in a wind. She was a square, heavy, flat-faced Indian, stolid by nature.

Now, between deep drink and bereavement, she had the look of one under the first, surprising shock of a blow that will stun; she was permeated with a nightmare of grief and drunkenness. Her son should have been dancing here, he should have been one of the Women, and he was drowned. She wore no special costume, only the simple, embroidered blouse and narrow skirt of her tribe, her bare feet moved to the quick time of the *marimba* as though an outside force jerked them; above her feet she was heavy, sagging, no lift in her back, her arms hanging limp.

She alone, then, was real; the elaborate, grotesque dancers, jigging up and down, became merely figments of the torment in her brain. They wheeled and turned back around her, ignoring her, and she them. The crownéd Jaguar, the gorgeous Hunters went past; the Deer bowed and bobbed beside her; they did not even seem to avoid her.

She did not look directly at any of them, but always her feet took her among the little women. Her son should have been one of them, her son was dead, her son was hidden somewhere among these creatures, if only she could find him. So she moved towards the Women, always dancing, and the waist-high Women, who had no faces, ebbed past her like all the rest. Lion rose up before her, moved to one side, and she was surrounded by soldier-Monkeys with blank, amusing faces. Patiently she danced to where the Women were maneuvering, and the line swung past her again without losing step.

The Dance Teacher spoke in pitying tones to an Indian, who walked up to her, took her hand, and led her, staggering slightly, docile, back into her house. "The poor woman," people said, "our hearts are pained for her. Let us hope she will rest, the poor woman."

One began to see green in the tree-tops, the eastern mountains became solid, silhouetted against grey that was molten silver and then deep gold through a cleft. The dress rehearsal was over.

With offerings of flowers, pine-tips and incense, and always the unvarying prayers, the whole village presented itself in front of the church. The *marimba* began again its maddening, monotonous little tune. The air was fresh with dawn quality. The Deer came into the open space before the church, Jaguar and Lion began to shake their rattles. Saint Mark was receiving his gift.

Corpus Christi Procession, Santa Fe

The American artist, John Sloan, finds material rich and varied and fundamental in the colorful life of the great Southwest. In the mingling of the races, in religious ritual and in the tentshow, he has surely and picturesquely caught real dramatic values. The landscape becomes the dominating presence in this painting of a festival ceremony.

GALVIN TENT SHOW

The peripatetic theatre still finds an appreciative audience in the land of great distances. Mr. Sloan has achieved interesting contrasts in light, and some strong human values, in this moment from a drama enacted under canvas.

Traveling Carnival, Santa Fe

The Mexican, the Indian and the cowboy look forward to visiting these shows whose glittering artificiality contrasts strangely with their surroundings. A fine poetic feeling for differences like these is discernible in John Sloan's work.

RAIN DANCE

More exciting than anything of the theatre the white man has brought to the desert are the dances and rituals that have grown from the land itself. As if to emphasize the fact Mr. Sloan here shows his Indians in strong and graceful movement dancing before spectators who seem grotesque in contrast.

THE SOUTH PARADES

Mardi Gras

By Lyle Saxon

MARDI GRAS in New Orleans is a gay and vivid holiday. It is a tinselled festival in which the beautiful is jostled by the grotesque—like a coronation ceremony and circus combined. It is an annual celebration which ushers in the Lenten season, a celebration which draws much of its color from the city's French and Spanish heritage.

New Orleans is unlike other American cities. It was a civilized and cosmopolitan community already a hundred years old, when, at the beginning of the last century, it became a part of the United States along with the Louisiana Purchase. It was then like a provincial French city, set down in the lush and semi-tropical growth at the mouth of the Mississippi River; the old section of modern New Orleans, the Vieux Carré, remains today almost as it stood in that far-off time. Old New Orleans was a city which liked to take its pleasures as it found them; it was a city which liked to smile, to make love, to sing and to dance. Nowadays, the blood of many nations mingles in its population; vessels from the Seven Seas are in the harbor. It is a cosmopolitan community, and the tapestry of the city's life is woven in gay colors; and now—as in the past—like a black thread in the design, Negroes lounge and shuffle through the streets.

The word "carnival" means a farewell to the flesh. But in New Orleans, the carnival is the gayest season of the year. Forty days of sackcloth seem small penalty for such unbridled gaiety.

The first Mardi Gras pageant was held in New Orleans in 1827 and with each year the festivity grew more and more elaborate. In those flush times just before the Civil War, the carnival celebrations were incredibly lavish. By 1870, despite the fact that the city had been reduced to poverty by war and pestilence, there were a dozen carnival organizations, each giving an elaborate ball.

Nowadays each Mardi Gras finds the city overflowing with visitors. Balconies and galleries which overhang the streets are filled

with spectators. The carnival colors, yellow, green and purple, are festooned from house to house. There are day and night parades, when glittering mock-monarchs ride through the streets.

Although a gay season of society begins with the New Year, and continues with rapid acceleration until Shrove Tuesday, the actual pageantry of Mardi Gras begins only the Thursday before. On Thursday night there is the procession and ball of Momus; on Saturday night, the ball of the Mystic Club; on Monday night the pageant and ball of Proteus; on Tuesday morning the parade of Rex, with the Druids' parade following; and on Tuesday night the parade and ball of Comus and the ball of Rex. The rulers of Mardi Gras are Rex and his Queen. The Queen and her maids of honor are chosen from the year's debutantes. Rex, King of the Carnival, is chosen by a committee from the roster of the Dukes of Rex organization. The organization—and those other clubs offering street pageants yearly—begins preparations a year in advance. The School of Design, an inner group, prepares drawings in color of each of the twenty floats, and there are costume designs for each masker. Then the builders of the floats and the costumers begin.

For weeks before Carnival, the little costume shops of Bourbon Street are full of excitement. Sewing machines whirr, and spangles are sewn in place. If one enters such a shop, he stops in amazement, confronted with a motley mess of armor, court costumes, kimonos, Javanese head-dresses, and animal heads of gaily colored *papier-maché*. Some of the disguises are costly and lavish; others —such as the ever-popular red devil—are cheap and simple enough. You may take your choice, but mask you must.

Picture New Orleans then, on the morning of Shrove Tuesday. There have been two street pageants before, and the city is full of tourists; the hotels are crowded; boarding houses are full. But, even though the fun has been good before, this is the day of days.

It is the hour shortly after sunrise, but already the children are astir; the tinkle of tiny bells is heard in the dim streets of the Vieux Carré as tiny masqueraders gather for their march toward Canal Street, the centre of the city. There are outcries and nonsensical squeals as the children appear on the streets of the French Quarter in the vicinity of the French Market, there by the levee. Perhaps the old negro cook, on her way to market, stops to don a devil mask; and, as like as not, the butcher who sells her beefsteak will be wearing an artificial nose. The spirit of foolishness is abroad;

no one escapes it. Despite your dignity, despite your social position, you are like to don a false mustache yourself before the day is over; or perhaps a pair of artificial eyes will do. But a gesture must be made.

By eight o'clock the adult maskers are abroad, going singly and in groups toward Canal Street, where the pageants will take place at noon. Already bands are playing and the street vendors are out, carrying with them trays of masks, or baskets of peanuts, or bunches of balloons and flags.

Canal Street is a wide thoroughfare with a double roadway; on Mardi Gras all vehicular traffic is barred from this street, and the broad expanse is given over to street dancing. Bands are stationed at the corners of the cross streets, and in the roadway the maskers dance. There are original and beautiful costumes: nuns, pirates, clowns, red-devils, ballet girls, snake-charmers carrying large artificial snakes, jockeys, old maids with grotesque curls and pantalets, giants on stilts, men dressed as cows, horses, elephants—occasionally one meets a centaur. The street is full of singing and laughter, and there is constant undercurrent of tinkling bells, forming parts of costumes. Horns are blown, showers of confetti float down from the balconies which overhang the streets. The sun shines down on a mass of ever-moving and ever-changing colors—red, purple, yellow, arsenic green. Flags flutter everywhere. Sunlight glitters on metal head-dresses, and sparkles upon spangles.

While the white maskers of New Orleans are gathering to dance in Canal Street, the Negroes hold high carnival in their own quarter, in comic burlesque of the grander doings of the white folks. At the end of a ship-canal which terminates beside the Union Station in Rampart Street, crowds of Negroes and mulattoes are gathering. Some of their costumes are highly original; men dress as women and women as men; it is not unusual to meet a lusty black stevedore wearing a bedraggled evening frock with a long train, and perhaps a large, feathered hat. Indian costumes are popular among the Negroes, and another popular one is that of a savage—simple enough as it requires only a grass skirt and some gay grease paint.

At nine o'clock in the morning the Zulu King arrives aboard a puffing motorboat in the ship-canal. He wears the costume of a savage chieftain, and drinks from a pocket flask as his loyal subjects cheer. His attendants wear similar costumes, but sometimes through modesty, or fear of cold, wear black knitted underwear in

addition to the grass skirts. The attendants wear no crowns—the king will not permit it—but instead carry stuffed white roosters on their shoulders. The king and his courtiers mount cotton wagons and ride through the Negro section, where cheering crowds line the route of march. It is the custom of the white carnival organizations to provide some trifling gifts for largesse to the crowd. As pageants such as Rex's pass through the streets, the maskers abroad the floats toss beads and other gay trinkets to the spectators. The Zulu King, not to be outdone, tosses bananas and cocoanuts about. One year, not so long ago, a wood-burning cook-stove was mounted on a wagon, and hot catfish was tossed out into open mouths of the Negroes along the route.

By eleven o'clock the parade is over and the Zulu King's ball begins; it lasts, frequently, for eighteen hours, and it is one of the most bizarre sights to be seen in New Orleans; but it is frequently dangerous, too, as there are numerous fights and accidents.

The Negroes are well along with their celebration before the Canal Street festivity is really underway. As the hours pass, Canal Street becomes tight-packed with maskers; the din is incredible, and there are many "little parades" to amuse the spectators. Various small organizations stage comic parades. There is one political organization called "The Jefferson City Buzzards" which has given a humorous parade each year for more than twenty years. The members are men of middle age, and usually they are fat; they dress each year as babies, wearing white dresses and socks; their rotund bodies are draped with the widest of baby-blue sashes; their blond wigs are something to see; their cheeks flame with rouge, as they march solemnly along, sucking lollipops, and followed by the bawdiest of jazz bands.

At noon, Rex, King of the Carnival, comes to town. This is the big moment of the day. And the Rex parade is unusually lavish and costly.

First a group of mounted policemen clearing the route, forcing the tight-packed masqueraders back toward the curb. Then, blaring bands and outriders in doublet and hose, velvet-clad riders with sinister black masks. Rex follows, riding high on his swaying car—a great gilded chariot some twenty-five feet high—with the throne on top. The monarch is dressed in white and gold, and his diamond crown and sceptre glitter in the sunlight.

The twenty floats which follow present a series of tableaux, and

the whole tells a story of the Golden Age. Here we see again the old tales of mythology: Ulysses setting sail, with bare-armed oarsmen pulling their outstretched, golden oars; Jason and the golden fleece; Circe, ablaze with jewels, turning the companions of Ulysses into golden swine.

Crowds cheer each float as it goes by, and the maskers aboard the slow-moving cars toss beads and metal trinkets into the hands upheld to catch them. Each float is followed by a brass band; one tune meets another, drowns it out, only to be hushed by still another.

Before the Boston Club the pageant pauses. There, on a balcony high above the crowded street, the Queen waits to greet the King. She sits, a piquant, slim girl, surrounded by other debutantes, amid banks of flowers. The king, high on his throne, toasts her in champagne, which is brought to him by waiters who swarm up the side of his throne on step-ladders. It is a quaint and pretty ceremony. Cynics tell us that, nowadays, the champagne bottle holds only ginger-ale—but I have my doubts, just the same.

And all through the long and gaudy afternoon the revellers continue their merriment. There are countless contests to while away the time. And in other parts of the city there are entertainments, too. At each public market a dance is in progress, and the Vieux Carré is gay with maskers. The cafes of the French Quarter are lively enough. If one is fortunate, he may still sip the dear, forbidden beverages; and, if one is very lucky indeed, even absinthe. It is considered "lucky" to drink absinthe on Mardi Gras.

At twilight the masks are removed, but the revellers continue to dance in the streets. Shortly after dusk the Comus parade appears. Comus is the last, and most dearly loved, of all the kings of Carnival, and the night pageant is a dream festival.

First a red glow in the sky, and great clouds of smoke sweeping up toward the far-off stars; then a distant sound of music, faint and sweet. The parade appears out of the dark, as though by magic, each float surrounded by strutting Negroes, who carry the flaring *flambeaux*. Red-robed Negroes and rearing horses, smoke swirling up, and the great, swaying floats, glimmering with vivid colors—red, purple, green, yellow. And gold everywhere, as though the riches of the world were spilled out to make a dream holiday for these fortunate enough to be there to see. The parade passes through the principal business streets, and then turns into the narrow thoroughfares of the Vieux Carré, where the huge, swaying

cars fill the streets from sidewalk to sidewalk, and the maskers riding atop the floats are on a level with the balconies.

In the old days, Comus held his ball at the French Opera House, but now that the old building is gone, the ball is held at the new Municipal Auditorium which fronts on old Congo Square, just at the edge of the French Quarter. And at the Comus ball, the world of society gathers for its last revel before the dawn of Ash Wednesday. At midnight the climax of the carnival is reached, when Rex and his Queen leave their own ball and come to join Comus at the stroke of twelve. The costumes are magnificent, and the mingling of the two carnival Courts is the high moment of Mardi Gras.

All the bars are down on Mardi Gras. Anything goes. You may do exactly as you please, and it will never be held against you. For New Orleans is a city that knows how to play. It has been playing the game of Mardi Gras for more than a century, and it knows all of the rules of the game. Mardi Gras is the time to lose your inhibitions, and the native New Orleanian makes the most of it. Garbed in the anonymous mask and domino, he goes forth to commit his folly and be done with it; he gets rid of his temptation by yielding to it, which after all, is a simple and direct way of doing it. There will be time enough for repentance and prayer when Lent begins; and—if we are very strong-minded—we may go from our night of pleasure directly to Early Mass in the old Saint Louis Cathedral, down on Jackson Square.

Black Belt Processionals

By CARL CARMER

DOWN in the township of Nokomis, Alabama, in Escambia County, they tell a queer story. Many years ago, they say, two brothers named Ezekial and Uriah Smith lived in Nokomis. Their father was a rich man, and when he died Ezekial took his share of what was left to him and left town. But Uriah stayed. He took some of his money and built himself a fine house at the top of the hill above the spring. Uriah used

to say that the water from the spring was the best water anywhere in the country.

After a while Uriah married a girl from Nokomis and she lived with him in the house at the top of the hill. He hadn't been married very long before he got to drinking. People say there "wasn't hardly a time when ole man Smith wasn't daid to the worl'." He used to have to try pretty hard to get up the hill.

One Saturday night "ole man Smith" came home drunk as usual. The water bucket on the porch was empty and he picked it up and started back down to the spring. When he was almost there he stumbled and fell. His head caught in a forked branch of the sycamore that grows just above the spring. When he was found next morning he was dead and his face was completely black.

It is strange that an accident that happened so long ago should have had an influence on what I saw on a spring morning in Alabama many years later. Black Nathan had told me, "The colored folks is studyin' to have a parade to make the crops grow. They have it every year. Hit's goin' to be down by the spring." And so I was down by the spring to watch.

I saw them walking down the hill from the direction of the old house (now in decay and "hanted," I am told). They wore their Sunday best—black suits and white shirts and collars for the men, black skirts and white shirt-waists for the women—adding to the silhouette effect as I looked up at the long line of them in sharp outline against the red clay of the barren slope and the light blue of the sky beyond it. They were singing a spiritual, one I have rarely heard, *Break Them Chains,* and they were swaying slowly in time to its minor cadences. As they walked nearer I saw that their leader—a lanky negro, unbelievably black—carried a handful of brightly colored feathers—chicken and turkey feathers. When he came to the sycamore tree he lifted his long arms and tied the feathers in the fatal fork where "ole man Smith" had strangled. He tied them so that they hung down brushing the top of his head. The heads of the negroes following him kept them swinging. Some of these followers carried forked sticks tied together to make crosses. Others clasped bits of broken bright colored glass—here a shattered green teapot, there a jagged gleaming golden bottle. One proudly bore a little light blue glass tower such as telephone linemen use in stringing wires.

The tall man in front led the procession in a series of wide

concentric circles about the spring. When the last figure had passed under the swaying feathers, the tune faded into silence. Each negro bent down and planted his cross or his colored glass upright in the earth. As soon as this had been done a group of them solemnly approached the tree. They took from their pockets old glass snuff boxes brilliantly variegated. (I looked closely at them later and discovered that they were filled with bright pebbles.) The negroes tied them to the branches of the sycamore and returned to their places in the circles. Then without any apparent signal they all joined hands. At once a mournful minor dirge arose, growing stronger with each word:

Long time ago
There used to be
A man whose name
Was Ur-i-eee.

There was a short silence, then from all those Negro throats came a low moaning wail. Its volume increased—died away. It was wild, eerie, horrible—a shuddering cry that had its roots far back in the past in a distant tropical land. After each stanza of the dirge, this cry was repeated and each time, though I came to expect it, it frightened me. This was the rest of their song:

He lived on top
Of the big hill
Till the night before
That he got killed.

His woman waited
At the door
Till late that night
But he came no more.

His woman waited
At the door
But he went way down
And come no more.

He got a bucket
From the stand
And down the hill
He almost ran.

And down the hill
He almost ran
And yes, oh, Lawd
He was a man.

We found him there
In this forked tree
And, oh, his face
Was black to see.

And, oh, his face
Was black to see
And oh, my Lord
We will be free.

And now he's gone
So far away
But he'll be back
For judgment day.

The last awful wail did not end as had the others—it continued in a low rhythmic moaning as the leader swayed back up the hill—making the feathers swing again as they touched his close-curled

head. The rest walked after him, moaning, moving as if in a slow ritual dance. The last one reached the top of the hill and vanished over its edge. I heard them wailing for another minute. Then the silence of a hot Alabama noon settled down. I wondered by what strange circumstance ole man Smith's accidental death many years ago had caused this rite of fertility. Black Nathan had told me, "He was a bad man an' he treated his niggers bad." Perhaps the blight of his cruel spirit lingered on the land. But now its power was broken. In irregular circles about the spring stood the crosses and the glistening colored-glass fragments. There would be good crops for another season.

* * * * *

TOWARD the upper edge of the Black Belt in Alabama is the town of Livingston. It is the county seat of Sumter County and has a town square surrounded by big shade trees, hitching posts (a few are still left), the courthouse, the jail, and a few stores. The front walls of the stores rise for a full two stories and the second one shows windows with closed blinds. If you look at some of these buildings from the side you discover that the windows are deceiving. The rooms which they would illuminate are not there. The front wall and the windows are mere pretenses at dignity.

Most of the time Livingston lives rather slowly and sleepily, like the other Black Belt towns. In the late summer the cotton wagons creak behind the plodding mules toward the gin. Later small motor trucks loaded with baskets of light brown pecans rattle toward the railroad station. They are about the only evidence of Yankee invasion. A normal college cloisters a group of young ladies, carefully herded away from the world of men by an anxious president.

As the cold rains come and the leaves drop, however, something happens to Livingston. There is a whispering in the stores about the town. Eyes as dull and sleepy as the town all summer begin to brighten. Christmas comes with its turkeys and fire-crackers. The whispering grows. Secrecy is in the atmosphere.

On New Year's Eve about seven o'clock there is a light in the sky over by The Hollow just outside of town. Huge bonfires are burning there. Figures move toward them, stealthily through the town, and appear suddenly in the firelight, masked and strangely costumed. A painted, feathered Indian, a pirate with yellow metal

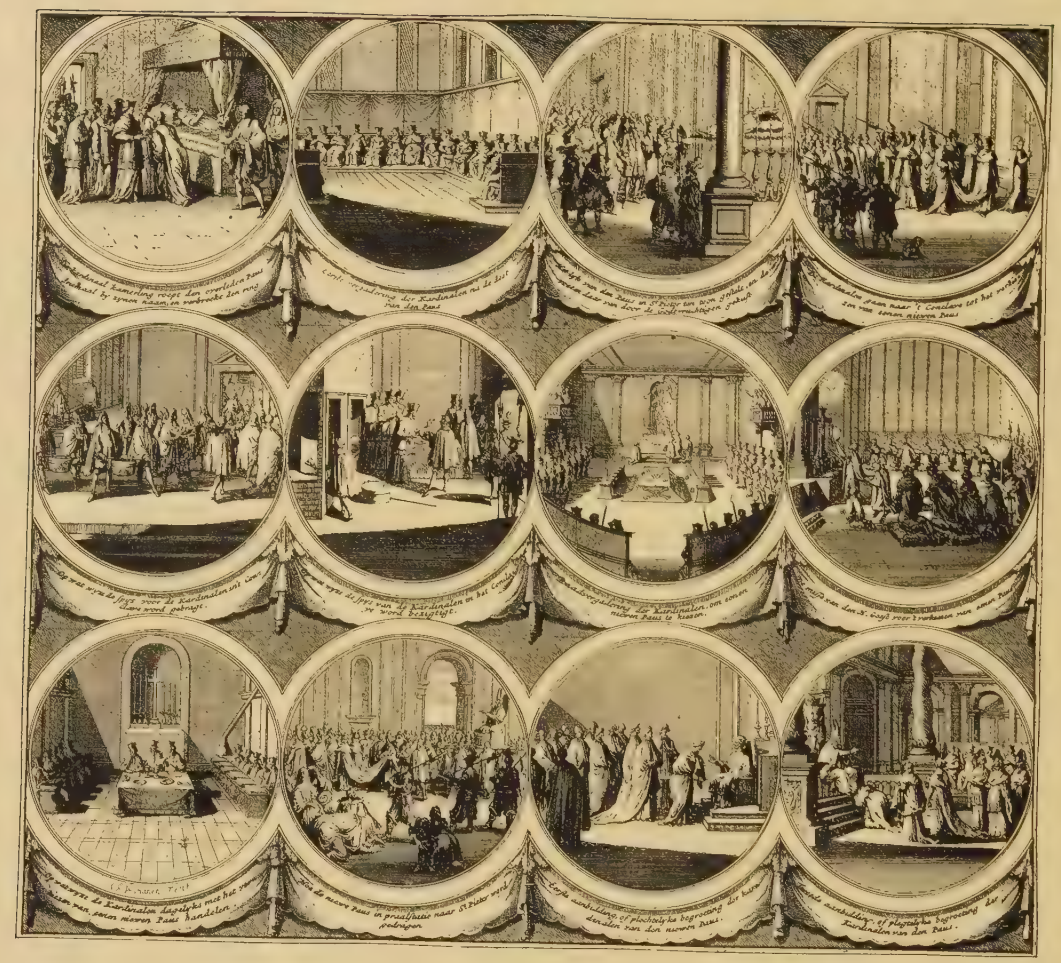
dangling from his ears, a cowboy in chaps and sombrero—the motley rout grows. Suddenly there is a sound of drums. Two Scotch Highlanders, their sticks flailing high, are beating out a march. A portly gentleman in a bath robe and nightcap and a painted wire mask steps out ahead of the drummers—as he has done for over twenty-five years—and the march has begun. Up and down the streets of the town they tramp, between lines of applauding spectators. It is a full two hours before they approach the "bored well," in the center of the town square for the last time. Once there was a big hotel near the "bored well," its broad verandas a triumph of lattices and scrolls and jig-saw designs. People came there from far and near to benefit by the well-nigh miraculous powers of the well water. Now the hotel is gone and an ugly brick edifice shelters the ever-flowing medicinal waters. In the old hotel, after the New Year's Eve revels, there was always a masqued ball, a "grand finale", people called it, to a night of joy. But an evangelistic revival, a few years ago, put a stop to that, apparently for good. But not to masking and parading. The masquers stop now beside the "bored well." Prizes are awarded to the best costumes, and a general unmasking and merrymaking takes place. The Livingston D. U. D.'s have ushered in another year.

This custom is so old that even the oldest citizen of Livingston does not know for certain its origin. It is thought that one Colonel Wetmore, a Scotch settler from North Carolina, brought the notion to Livingston with him when the town was settled in the year 1831. The legend goes that he called the participants "The Indomitables."

Now they are called the D. U. D.'s. Whether or not this is a modification due to the easy-going Southern speech, I do not know. Citizens of Livingston suggest many waggish meanings for the letters. Whatever their meaning they symbolize something very precious to a little conservative Southern town—the spirit of carnival in which it may forget itself one night a year.

MADAME MARIA OUSPENSKAYA

Werner Drewes's portrait of the former character actress of the Moscow Art Theatre, who is to act in several summer playhouse productions during July and August.



ELECTION OF A POPE

Conclave and ceremonial in the election of a new Pope, one of the oldest and most famous "pageants of the event." (*From* Old and New Rome, *Amsterdam, 1704*)

THE NEW PAGEANTRY

By Roy Mitchell

"PAGEANT" is a word whose implications have widened with the years. Once the name for a very specific form of religious drama—a name, indeed, for the wagon upon which a single "page" of the cycle of plays was given—it has come to mean anything in the wide field of spectacular presentation that lies between athletic competition and drama.

The many uses of the word are confusing, but the confusions can be solved if we divide pageantry into its three great subdivisions—the Pageant of the Event, the Pageant of the Memory and the Pageant of the Idea.

The Pageant of the Event is spontaneous, it is of the moment and does not require any more reason than the importance of the event that it distinguishes. It is the marking out by pomp and enrichment of any natural social or state function.

It is always in the form of a progress. No matter what rite or ceremony it celebrates, the Pageant of the Event becomes sooner or later the movement of persons to or from that ceremony. It may be religious, the Thesmophoria of the Athenian women going to Colias, the procession of the *mystae* bearing the effigy of Dionysus along the road to the greater Eleusinia, the passage of the Palatine Salii through the streets of Rome, or the meeting of Cybele at its gates. It may be the passing of the car of Jagannatha through the throngs of Puri, or the modern pageantry of Corpus Christi.

The Pageant of the Event may be conceived in gaiety, the progress through the carnival of a newly chosen queen of a Mardi Gras or a Mi-Carême. On rarer occasions it may be state pageantry, the progress of rulers to their place of meeting, of a prince to his wedding, a king to his coronation or the body of a king to its tomb. Greatest and most moving of all Pageants of the Event has been the return of victorious armies. They are intensely of the moment and with no artifice at all must always derive power from the emotional swirl through which they move—of jubilation, of thanksgiving, of pity for the wounded and sorrow for the dead. When

to the simple return of the army there have been added the splendors of a triumph, the Pageant of the Event with its banners, its captives and its spoils has reached a barbaric magnificence our age cannot emulate, if it would.

The occasion of all these pageants dictates their form. The ceremony dwindles, the great event is the processional, and each unit represents only itself without change as it moves over the appointed way through the crowd. The spectators change as it goes, the elements of the pageant do not. Change would be useless because what would be started for one spectator would be continued for another and ended for a third, and so would edify nobody. The Pageant of the Event is best as a series of moving tableaux.

The Pageant of the Memory arises out of the past and is the reconstruction of a series of episodes bound together by a tradition, the history of a people or of a place. It may be a simple procession of figures in the dress of earlier times, or of floats proceeding in historical sequence like those seen from time to time in the historic centres of Europe. But if each episode requires to be unfolded dramatically, the Pageant of a Memory ordains a form of its own, the masque form. It also flows, but its spectators instead of being scattered along its route are concentrated at one point and each group as it reaches that point pauses, enacts its scene and passes on.

The transition from procession to masque is seen in the history of the platforms or "pagyns" of the English Biblical mysteries which were evidently at the inception fixed pictorial groupings on their wagons, but gradually developed the action and dialogue recorded for us in the play books of the various cycles. In order to develop thus they must have concentrated their audiences.

Within the last quarter of a century the Pageant of the Memory with its masque form has had a notable revival, chiefly in England, where it has become the custom to reconstitute, sometimes on a lavish scale, the associations of a historical spot by enacting, in sequence before a fixed audience, episodes that have occurred there. The Sherborne Pageant of 1905 was the first of a long series which, with increasing experience, have made use of dramatic motion, dialogue, the dance, songs and music. Later pageants, like the St. Albans, added the narrative choir to link and interpret the episodes.

The masque can be a very beautiful form, given the surroundings and the historical event and given a strong emphasis on decorative

values. Unhappily it has fallen too often into the hands of literalists and devotees of illusion, who dream of getting a reproduction of this or that actuality into this actual place and never quite make their dreams come true. Especially is this the case with historical masques played by day where a searching sun discloses every ill-fitting wig and every Adam's-apple that protrudes from an oversize ruff. Played at night under colored lights the stream of memories that come out of the dark, eddy for a moment in the playing space and flow again into the dark can be profoundly impressive, and if the effect is less like what it actually was at the time the event occurred, it is much more as the artists of that time delineated it. After all we draw our dreams of the past from its artists.

The Pageant of the Idea relies neither upon the embellishment of the current event nor yet upon the recalling of the past, although it may use either or both. Its theme is abstract and it can draw into it whatever elements, actual or symbolical, it may require to embody that theme. It is wider in its scope than the memory and broader in its treatment, and while it can be represented in a progress with symbolical tableau or in the flowing masque form, neither can adequately contain it. It too must ordain its natural form. It is most powerful when its playing-space has many entrances and gives room for more forceful movement, for swirl, for swelling and contracting, for threading, for wave-motion. It demands a playing space that can be a pool.

Two great modern inventions make the dramatic spectacle peculiarly the mass-art of the future and permit us to transcend the limitations that have bound the procession and the masque; one, our new control of light, the other our newer control of sound.

When the first pageant was played under controlled light, the first step was taken into the pageantry of the future—a step in plasticity. Here was a new and magical power. It could sweep from place to place, expand to fill the field, contract to an intense point, swell or diminish. It could emphasize, select, enrich, compose and recompose, recur and reiterate. And quite as important, more important even in terms of the technical problem, it could reject and erase. By its very intensity it could throw into darkness whole parts of the scene. By its mere removal it could build walls and hang curtains wherever the pageant master pleased.

Still, however, there was little for the ear. There could of course

be all the instrumental and choral music there ever had been, but, in so great a space as would accommodate a great spectacle, the sounds could be no more than a hum carried on the breeze—and if the weather was not right, carried away by the breeze. No words were intelligible. A pageant of light alone might be beautiful but it had to be painfully simple and childish because there was no adequate way of explaining what it was all about.

With the first use of amplified sound we have taken another step, this time in dimensions. The narrative choir of St. Alban's, beautiful in its small field, could never fill a large one, nor could it keep pace with the motion it explained, because sight travels so much faster than sound. Here was the completion of the mechanism that gave the director mastery over motion and sound in terms of great spaces. Motion, the art. Light, the revealer. Sound, the interpreter.

Let us project.

Let us imagine we have a park which is a river valley, widened at this point to make a great, irregular bowl. It may be half a mile wide and a mile or more long. On the high slopes of one side of it there is room for one hundred, two hundred thousand people. These are our audience. Somewhere above the middle of the audience on the hilltop are the lamps, a battery of great searchlights that are the living hand of the pageant-master, to reveal or to obliterate. They are the pointing finger.

Down in the playing-space there is a natural, or an artificial, mound surmounted by a conventional structure—an arrangement of pillars, a Stonehenge, a palace, a temple front—ivory tinted and capable of being colored with light, which in this art of pageantry means capable of being lost and found. Leading to it are easy slopes and broad flights of steps. Scattered around it are groves of trees, roads perhaps, and beyond it the river. Past that again are the hills of the farther side. Our palace is the visual focus and it is also the screen for our sounds. In the space beneath it are the soloists, choristers, the musicians and the devices for noise—the thunder—drums, crashes, gongs, chimes and whatever else the spectacle may require. Radiating out from them to all parts of the audience go the wires that carry the amplified sound.

The choir is the custodian of our theme. Its poem is now narrative, now descriptive, now reflective, now broken up into passages for a single great voice, now into dialogue for two or three or

DESIGN BY INIGO JONES

The early part of the 17th century found a strong connecting link between the arts of architecture and stage design in the person of Inigo Jones. The relationship is particularly obvious in Mr. Jones's designs for the elaborate Ben Jonson masques and in the designs pictured here. It is believed that the one above is for Scene I of Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum,* 1634. According to the description given in *Designs by Inigo Jones* (published by the Walpole and Malone Societies) in the background are the Arch of Titus with an obelisk and a tall tower beyond. On the right a free rendering of the temple of Antoninus and Faustina and other remains in the Campo Vaccino with a triumphal column behind them. (*Copyright of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire*)

DESIGN BY INIGO JONES

This design is for Scene II, The City of Sleep in the 17th century drama *Luminalia,* 1638, which is said to have been written by Sir William Davenant. Here again the architectural leanings of the designer are much in evidence. The design for the lower part of the scene, under the segment of the circle, has not been preserved. The Walpole Society publication states that one of the spectacular devices planned for this scene was the appearance of an antique ship "seene farre within the scene, sailing in the aire." (*Copyright of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire*)

many voices, now the strophe and antistrophe of antiphonal choirs, now perhaps it is the jeers of a rabble, shouts, applause, now lyrical passages for a dance, or the singing of boatmen or of troops on the march, or of women returning from the harvest. Sometimes it is a hymn, sometimes the sound of sobbing, sometimes of laughter. Sometimes there are no voices at all, only the instruments.

Motion in terms of this art must be on a great scale. There is no place here for finicking about single figures, the color of hair or the fit of a coat. Costume is an unsewn piece of fabric and an actor may carry half a dozen changes tucked away in his girdle until the time comes to use them. Color is not of this person or that person; it is handled in great masses. One person is not a unit. To have any force a unit may run to a hundred persons, and, for the whole spectacle I am talking about, there may be three or four or five thousand figures in the field.

Our first concern is mass. Our next concern is mass in motion, and we must weave our spectacle in terms of great movement. Here from this hill-top we will make it. Our field is dark—light enough for the actors to go freely about, too dark for the audience to distinguish anything clearly. When our light begins to swing it will make the darkness of the unemphasized spaces complete.

Moving through the dim field, assembling, breaking up and reassembling go our actors on their prearranged timing under the guidance of their marshals, and taking our time from the choral sequence we will find and use our figures as we need them.

Our story calls, perhaps, for an Indian village on the eve of battle. We swing our lights to the place and spreading them to cover it, reveal the field dotted with Indians, their tepees, their horses, travoises, their fires and all the accessories of their village life. Now the pencils converge swiftly to a point, excising everything but a war council, and spread again to take in a war dance while the air throbs with the sound of their drums.

Now perhaps we want the ships of an explorer, perhaps of an invader dropping down the river, their sails in high color and their decks dotted with clusters of men. We may find them again and again as they recur in the theme until at last their journey culminates in a landing.

It may be that we want for our sequence, long weaving lines of journeying figures, on foot with their bundles, a movement that will represent and also symbolize the migration of a people or the

filling up of a land with settlers. We may use them a while, drop them and come back to them, using them as a growing theme, until presently, by volume or position they take up a central place in our story.

Perhaps we have a theme of the great war. Slowly the mound and stairs fill up with people saying farewell to departing soldiers, and through the multitude the pencils of light trace the thread of marching men until nothing is left but the last watchers who dot the shoulder of the mound. Then the temple is lost and when we find it again its front has vanished and its interior is shown with tall, glowing, stained-glass windows and a great altar, while from the choir rises a hymn for the safety of men in battle. The lights which have concentrated on the altar spread their rays and gradually take in the whole mound and foreground, revealing the multitude who were saying farewell, now mantled in and kneeling with their backs to us. They take up a passage of the hymn and the whole field throbs with the swell of their voices.

Our light fades and there is a linking passage for the choir. When the pencils converge again, it is to pick out a thread of returning men winding through the trees. They enter into a sea of women welcoming them, and are lost in the crowd amid shouts and a great chant of welcome.

Perhaps we seek a symbol for the passage of years or of the westward sweep of a people. Under cover of a distant episode the foreground fills with crouching figures covered by neutral colored cloths. Rhythmically, rank upon rank, section after section, they rise slowly and sway, changing from the color of earth, to green, to gold, under the lights, undulating in the wind in the great waves of the dance of the growing grain.

These are jottings, the merest fragments of what we may look for when the cities have learned to make pageantry their communal affair. When they are tired of their *papier-maché* confections on wheels, the blatant advertising, and the tissue paper twisted into the wheels of the iceman's truck, when they have used up the last possibilities of their local history, have laid Peace with her twig, Fame with her trumpet, History with her roll of paper and Justice with her bandage away in the archives, I think they will turn to the Pageant of the Idea with all its latencies of motion, of light and sound and color.

MALLORCA REMEMBERS

By Albert Margolies

AFTER harboring the drama within its austere walls for four centuries, the Mediaeval Church sent it out into the public square. That was seven hundred years ago. But for the people of Mallorca, living under the perpetuating sun of the Mediterranean, it may well be an event that has happened within their own memories. Theirs is one spot in the world where the theatre of the Middle Ages can still be seen; not in revival through intellectual impetus, nor as a studied attempt at authenticity. Theirs is nothing but the earthy unschooled Mediaeval drama, presented for an equally earthy audience. It is entirely free from pretense, and it is done as though any subsequent development in the drama was simply non-existent. There is no advance announcement; no reviews. The stranger comes upon the scene accidentally, if at all. The throwback through seven centuries is so sudden and of so complete a nature, that one almost feels the jolt.

Each year, on January sixth, or as near that day as is feasible, the people of Mallorca gather in the central square of their own small township to see a performance of *King Herod and the Three Magi*. Both in its presentation by the actors and its reception by the audience, the affair is entirely unrestrained. Not one of the thousands concerned seems to be conscious of the fact that here is something unique. In two hours it is over. Last year and the year before, a century ago and five centuries ago, it was done in the same way. Next year it will be done again.

At the back of the platform on which the play is given, is the local church. At one side is what may be called the town hall. Each of these still shows its old dignified interest in the proceedings. Surrounding the square on the two remaining sides are the houses of the better-to-do citizens. The square itself swarms with people, while many sit on balconies among their chosen friends, or look through windows. It would be difficult to find even a handful among the spectators who consider the play in its religious connotations, for they come to the square chiefly to be amused. Away

from the rigidity of the church and the awe-inspiration of stained glass, they want nothing more or less than entertainment. As with their ancestors, the subject matter is not important.

Even the costumes used in the production of *King Herod and the Three Magi* are the very ones that were made for the Guild's productions, when they fell heir to the drama five or six hundred years ago. There is only one complete set in existence, and it has been in the possession of the local government officials for centuries. It is this paucity of costuming that accounts for the fact that all of the dozen towns of the island do not present the play on the same day. None will even attempt it without the very dress that has been a property of the production for so many years. But it is in no sense a travelling show, since only the costumes move from place to place. The actors, the platform, and the crude settings composed almost entirely of natural flowers and living branches, are provided by the town in which the play is presented. Thus while the public square in Soller de Mallorca is teeming with spectators on the Sunday after Epiphany, that of Pollensa De Mallorca may be only in the midst of preparation.

The performers are entirely non-professional, depending for their livelihood on the fields, the small shops, or the thousands of sheep that graze on the Mallorcan mountain-side. Like their Mediaeval ancestors, they volunteer for this work as for a recreation, albeit an inevitable one. The sole difference seems to be that while, in those days, all the actors were dyers, or all carpenters, or masons, or glass-blowers, depending on the particular Guild that was presenting the play, today the cast may contain all of these. In the production of the Herod play at Soller last January, the players included two farmers, two shepherds, three muleteers, a cabinet-maker, an electrician and a bank-clerk.

Wherever it is possible to project a stroke of comedy, the Mallorcan will emphasize it in the traditional way, a fact for which the constant laughter among the spectators is audible proof. Herod's anger on hearing of the Saviour's birth is just enough exaggerated to bring the first laugh. The three Magi, dressed in different degrees of gold and ermine, ride into the square on decrepit mules, giving cause for a gale of laughter by a truly theatrical inconsistency. It is the Scribes, however, stumbling over their long beards as they hasten to obey the call from Herod, who bring genuine howls. To find the prophecy that the Saviour will be born, they

turn the pages of their heavy tomes with such comic haste that the gravity of the situation is completely annulled. A loud sneeze executed by one of the midwives (parts performed by men) does nothing toward the achievement of dignity. By the time the *Te Deum* is sung, at the close of the play, the audience is in so light a mood as to drown it out with their own conversation.

The relationship between the actors and the audience is a warm one. It is a common thing for a player with a little time on his hands between cues, to hold conversation with any of the crowd around the platform. It is nothing for Herod, at such moments that do not demand all his attention for a display of passion, to pull a cigarette from his generous robes, and bend over to receive a light from a spectator nearby. It is even less for him to pick up the hem of his cloak and perform a needed scratching of his leg. One attendant, indeed, has as his sole duty the soothing of inaccessible spots. Actors and audience are continually greeting one another. The occasion bears a rare quality of intimate festivity. The play is their own even if it does happen to come from the Scriptures; and these are the very people to whom the Mediaeval Church first gave the drama.

The onlooker re-lives that moment in dramatic history when the first signs of a popular theatre began to manifest themselves in the public squares; the moment when the Church began to realize that it had done itself a poor turn by relinquishing control. There is an abandon and a feeling of fun that portend a coming development; not sacred, but profane.

A realization that begins to impress itself on the mind of the onlooker is that the present culture of Mallorca is very closely associated with that of the Middle Ages. Now, as then, the Church is the most vital element in the life of the people. The cathedrals are still the centres of most public activities. Religious processionals retain all the pomp and importance of the past. Literature is, in a large degree, confined to the Bible, and most of the schools are under the sponsorship of the Church. Life on the island is simple, almost primitive. Although the bustling city of Barcelona is but a ten-hour sail distant, none of its modern mobility penetrates Mallorca. Background for form as old as Mediaeval drama is as complete as it is intensely native.

THE BEAR COMES TO THE VILLAGE

By Stoyan Christowe

WHEN the Gipsy rattled the tambourine and sang out a ditty about bandits and haiduks, Marko, the bear, stood up to his full height and shook and swayed his shaggy trunk. A mighty bear was Marko. His body standing up was like the stump of an oak. A halter of strong leather sewn with waxed cord and clasped by metal encompassed his head. But a heavy chain hooked to a ring that hung at his nose like a padlock to a door was what held him to his master and to his fate. When Marko fed or wrestled, the headstall was removed; the chain always remained fastened to his nose. And when he forgot that he was a plaything, an entertainer of the people, and behaved like a bear, the Gipsy master pulled at the chain and the ring tore at the flesh. Then Marko gave out a deep groan, like the rumbling of the mountain when the earth shook all around.

From house to house, from threshing lot to threshing lot, the Gipsy, Kardan, led the chained beast and made him dance and perform tricks for the amusement of the people. A mare, a white, bony creature that needed neither tethering nor watching always limped behind man and bear and carried the flour sacks tied to the shabby packsaddle.

"Thou hast danced well and proper, Marko," Kardan would say as the bear concluded the dance. And by way of further commendation he would hand the beast his dogwood staff and add, "A shepherd be thou, Marko; three hundred sheep herd thou over the Balkan mountains!"

Staff upon shoulder in the manner of a shepherd's crook, Marko nodded his head, plainly showing that that would please him far better than this dancing before peasant folk. Yet he returned the scepter to his master and took from him the tambourine to pass to the hostess. Not until he had received it back filled with flour did Marko lower his giant frame to the earth.

But Marko is not an itinerant actor alone, he is also an itinerant doctor. As Kardan praises the housewife's generosity, she tells him that her only child, a boy of three that clings to her, screams in his sleep in the middle of the night and is otherwise a ready sacrifice to any pair of evil eyes. The Gipsy takes the infant in his arms and after petting him on the head places him astride the bear's back. The boy shivers and cries, but gradually his wails quiet down and he begins to touch the bear's wool. Soon his pale face opens in a smile and the next moment he laughs out loud, enjoying the bear ride and wanting to pluck the wool from the back of the animal.

"The boy will not scream in his sleep now," Kardan assures the mother. "All the fright and terror have been banished from his young heart. He has ridden a bear!" And that bear Marko. But one thing more. Some hair from Marko's haunches for the child to wear around his neck. That is why Marko's hips are hairless. The wool there has been shorn tuft by tuft and folk in many villages wear it in lockets at their breasts. Any bear is a mighty thing in many ways, but a bear like Marko, big and woolly like a haystack, is mightier still. If the spell of evil eyes will be broken by hair from ordinary bears, as anyone will tell you, then now surely by that of Marko who is the king of bears!

Kardan hoisted the dogwood staff on his shoulder, the chains clanged, and Marko shook onward like a loaded truck, mopping the earth with his furry paws. A frightful thing, a ghost-like thing was Marko, entertaining children and village folk, exorcising evil spells and healing ailments of divers kinds and of many uncertain origins.

The bear troupe now halted before a house which had been plagued by sickness for months. "Come, Marko, scare away the evil things!" said Kardan. But the beast balked at the threshold, a sure sign that the house was tied up with magics and was the habitat of spirits. The Gipsy drew at the halter-cord, but Marko still demurred, like a horse at a crossroad. The Gipsy gave a tug to the chain and the metal cut into the gristle. The bear leapt angrily across the threshold. Once inside, Marko sniffed in this corner and blew in that, growled here and grumbled there, swept the floor with his paws and shook his woolly trunk about the place like a mummer on New Year's Eve. If the evil things did not escape through the chimney it was none of Marko's fault.

The flour sacks on the mare's back bulged out considerably. Still the bear was followed on his way through the village by the entourage of youngsters who were needed on the threshing lots to lend a hand and who knew well that they would be thrashed good and hard for not being there. But what's a thrashing more or less when there's a bear in the village! And that bear Marko! Look how he shambles on, a troll led by a nose-ring, a mountain chained and commanded by a man. It is doctor for the peasant folk; circus, carnival and movie for the village youngsters.

"Show the good folk, Marko, what newly-weds do in their bridal chambers," commanded the Gipsy. And the huge grisly mass reclined upon the earth and petted and hugged itself so affectionately that young unmarried womenfolk giggled and hid their faces while their married sisters clucked tongues and uttered feigned curses against the brazen beast. The children shouted their delight.

Bear, master and mare, escorted by their retinue of youngsters, moved on. Slowly and heavily span the four paws; the broad furry mane trembled; the whole gigantic mass shuffled on like an overloaded haycart.

The house before which the troupe has halted is Mara's. The poor woman's eyes are pregnant with tears. She tells Kardan that her husband's been ill these many months and that there is no sign or telling but what he may be lying sick for many more. Grandmother Shimba has tried her magics on him. The grains of salt which she threw in the hearth popped and spurted and she herself sneezed and yawned. The village priest, too, came to the house with his censer and the copper kettle of holy water. He read high words from his book of psalms and made the sick man kiss the silver cross. He soaked a bunch of hyssop in the holy water and with it smacked the patient on the forehead. Then he walked about the house intoning divine words and sprinkling holy water over walls and things and shaking puffs of smoke from the censer. Still the poor man is unable to yoke his team of oxen and plow his neglected fields.

They carried the sick man out in the courtyard and covered him with a quilt. Like a nightmare Marko prowled and crawled over the suffering body. Groans of pain issued from under the

blanket. But Marko continued to tread over the covered form. It was all for the best. Village folk watched with interest and hoped that this might be the end of whatever had possessed the unfortunate man.

The troupe crossed the small wooden bridge on its way to the upper quarter. In the middle of the square it was met by Boyko, Boyko the bear-wrestler and no mistake. He was returning from the mountain, crook in hand and skin-bag over his shoulder. A stump of a man was Boyko; mightily he stepped. The earth, one felt, quaked beneath his gait. Boyko's goats summered in the highlands of Mount Pirin; his sheep wintered in the lowlands of the Shkya. Jackals and wolves were no strange animals to him. He had hacked the heads of bears and roasted wild boar in the forests of the Shar. He was the greatest bear-wrestler since Koka Trash the Albanian.

And now Boyko planted his feet in the middle of the square and leaning on his crook took a good look at Marko. The bear's hair stood on edge, like the quills on a hedgehog when touched with a stick. He paced nervously and grumbled; his nostrils expanding, his eyes giving side glances toward the man that stood before him in defiant posture.

"Ya," said Boyko, "I'll wrestle with him!" And he unslung the skin-bag from his shoulder. Hardly had Boyko spoken when youngsters scurried in all directions to carry the news to the grown folk:

"Boyko the shepherd will wrestle with Marko the bear!" They heralded the fact in mad screeches, hoping that in the resulting excitement the thrashing that was coming to them might be forgotten.

Horses and oxen were left in sheds to munch their hay, and chickens to snatch at the grain like thieves, while folk streamed to the square to see a man of the mountain wrestle a beast of the village.

The peasants formed a ring around the wrestlers. Kardan removed the bridle from Marko's head and holding him by the chain alone now said to him, "A wrestler be thou, Marko; with Boyko the shepherd match thy strength!"

The bear manoeuvered nervously and was slow to rise, but a tug at the chain suddenly brought the forearms in the air and

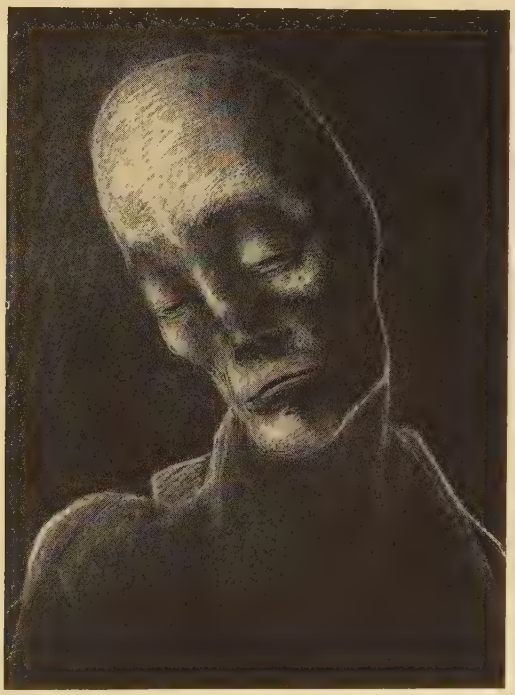
the grisly bulk stood upright in the middle of the square. Instantly Boyko charged like a bull and locked his arms around the bear's powerful body.

The village folk forgot about the wheat spread on the threshing lots and watched the show with zeal and animation equalling that of the children.

Like a man possessed Boyko tried desperately to down the unwieldy form. Summoning the strength from every muscle in his body he made superhuman efforts to lift the overwhelming bulk from the ground. As well might he have tried to pull an oak from the earth, for like an oak was Marko. He swayed and hopped and danced on his strong legs but he stayed upright and wrapped his furry surface about the struggling man.

Is Marko applying more pressure than is proper? His arms so clutch about the struggling man that even if he wants to back out he would find it hard. Moans and whines issue from the man; a deep groan, like a thunder, passes through the body of the beast.

And Kardan, who knows his bear, and knows better yet how a wrestling match between a bear and a man should be conducted, pulls at the chain. The metal cuts into the flesh and Marko gets the hint. Slowly, his giant frame begins to incline and he sprawls himself on his back in the middle of the square amidst the shouts and screeches of the children. It is all for the amusement of the people.



Masks used in the great choric war memorial, *Totenmal,* produced in Munich this summer.

THE FRATELLINI

Watercolor drawings, impressions of a French circus, by the young English miner-artist, Bissill, whose work has received much favorable notice in England since the Arts League of Service called attention to it about six years ago.

CLOWNS

Other circus-impressions by Bissill characterized by subtle coloring (unfortunately not available in the photographs), sureness of line, and exceptional feeling. Bissill's watercolor drawings are included in the Arts League of Service Traveling Portfolios. (*Photographs by Wallace Heaton, London*)

Costume designs by Frank Poole Bevan for the symbolic figures in the pageant, *Control,* written and produced by Professor George Pierce Baker of Yale University for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, celebrated last April at the Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken. Above, The Man and The Youth. Left, The Figure of Finance.

GILLES DE RAIZ

Europe's First Impresario

By Alvah C. Bessie

EXPONENTS of the "new" constructivism which has come out of post-war Europe may be somewhat taken aback by the information that its first practitioner flourished in France at no more recent period than the years 1404 to 1440. It is true that this early *régisseur* did not carry his settings to the fine flower of perfection which Meierhold has attained, but his interest in the theatre was purely personal, and he cherished no illusions about the theatre's mission or its place in contemporary life. To the noble lord Gilles de Raiz, the stage achieved its purpose when it broadcast his name and his attainments, an attitude not entirely unknown today. But Gilles de Raiz, after all, had a measure of achievement to proclaim.

He sprang of two of the oldest seigniorial families—the Lavals and the Craons—among whose living representatives the Montmorency family may be counted. He was the wealthiest noble of his time, and not even the king of France could rival his magnificence. He was capable of raising and supporting entire armies and, during the English campaigns, he was Jeanne d'Arc's right-hand man. At the time of Charles VII's coronation in the cathedral of Rheims, Gilles de Raiz, still well under thirty, was appointed Marshal of France, and as an indication of his gratitude, his king permitted him to bear the fleur-de-lys of France upon his crest.

Bernard Shaw made little enough of the Marshal in his play *Saint Joan*. He was content to display him as an extremely elegant and foppish young man who was not too popular among his companions. As a matter of fact, Gilles was extremely well-liked by his contemporaries—he was an excellent soldier and tactician, a well-educated gentleman and courtier, and he enjoyed the hearty popularity which is always at the command of any prodigal who is easy-going with his money and lavish in entertainment. The novelist, Huysmans, chose to take another view—and the protagonist

of his fine novel, *Là-Bas,* is writing a life of Gilles—laying particular stress upon the satanic aspects of his character. For it is well known that Gilles de Raiz, impoverished by excesses, sought to recoup his vanished fortunes by means of alchemy and black-magic. He suceeded only in having himself sentenced to death and executed in 1440, for "the abominable crime of heretical apostasy," and the fact that he had abandoned himself to the frightful practice of "demonic evocation", not to mention his crimes against nature, and the avowed murder of 200 little children, out of bloodlust or as part of the ritual of "demonic evocation." This is an aspect of his character which is irrelevant to the present context, though it makes fascinating reading.

The bare details of this worthy's life are incredible, though they all seem to have been confirmed by examination of the archives of Loire-Infèrieure, at Nantes. The local archivist, M. Emile Gabory, the only man who is actually in possession of the facts of the Gilles de Raiz affair, has written a lively biography of him.[1] Among other legends which have attached to the young Marshal of France, soldier, diabolist and theatrical-producer, is the supposition that he was the original of Perrault's famous *Bluebeard.* Even Shaw, who was fully familiar with the sources, chose to harness him with that epithet, and his stage-directions indicate that the actor is to wear a blue goatee! The mere fact that Gilles de Raiz was married only once, and did not even kill his only wife, should be enough to absolve him of this additional stigma, but it has persisted for many years, and you may examine the ingenious hypotheses yourself, if you care to look them up.

The pretext for this article is found in another department of Gilles' activities. It has been indicated that he was immensely wealthy; just how wealthy would be difficult to say, since there is no way of accurately evaluating the coinage of the period. But when he began to sell his estates in order to procure ready-cash, over twenty-five castles and their surrounding woodlands went into their purchasers' pockets for ridiculous sums of money. He never bargained, and when he bought he paid three and four times as much as the actual value of any article. He borrowed at usurious rates of interest, and even his companions plundered him.

Gilles was beset with the idea of commemorating the siege of

[1]Alias Bluebeard: The Life and Death of Gilles de Raiz, by Emile Gabory (Brewer & Warren).

Orléans, in which he had taken an important part. For years he had traveled about the country, giving performances of farces and *soties,* and his munificence was already legendary. His castles were thronged by the poor seeking alms despite the fact that wherever he happened to be, it was later noticed that children had disappeared. (Of course these accumulated disappearances eventually wrought his downfall, but we are ahead of our story.) This was before the period when Gilles instituted his famous collegiate of hand-picked singers and toured the provinces giving concerts of religious music, but even at this time, everything he did was done in the grand manner.

In 1434 he was to give the first performance of his specially written play—*The Mystery of the Siege of Orléans*—and he so arranged matters that the commemorative performances took place in the town itself. Here was the first "long-run" play in history. The Greek trilogies were known to have required an entire day for their performance, but *The Mystery of the Siege of Orléans* not only ran all day long, but is said to have been repeated every day for a year and a month! Gilles and his retainers lived in Orléans from August 1434 to September 1435. The theatre was erected in the centre of the town, and was a miracle of construction and management, consisting of a scaffolding five or six stories high, and as broad as the greatest stage now extant. On each floor of this structure a different act took place!

Gilles played himself, and seems to have broken the rule that there is no reason why an actor should be able to portray a role, just because he happens to have lived it. Wherever he went he was followed by crowds of satellites who shouted his name and praises. Lucullus could have wished no more. In his play he was pictured as a greater general than he probably was in the field, but that is of little moment. You have read, in the history of books, that at the battle of Tournelles, before Orléans, the Maid was wounded by an arrow, and a "valiant captain" stayed at her side, extracted the arrow and carried her to safety. That captain was Gilles de Raiz, who had been appointed to the place of guardian for Jeanne, by his powerful cousin and ally, La Trémoille.

But the most incredible part of this particular story remains to be told. Here are a few details: one hundred and forty actors and more than 500 supernumeraries appeared in the *Mystère du Siège d'Orléans.* They engaged in great battles and pompous court-

scenes, and their costumes, contrary to the usual procedure (Hollywood always excepted), were cut from the most luxurious materials obtainable, and imported from distant lands. Cloth-of-gold and silver, silks and resplendent velvets rioted in a tapestry of color upon this sumptuous scene. That is little enough; consider the fact that Gilles de Raiz (if the record speaks truly) did not permit these costumes to be utilized for more than one performance!

After his death, his heirs drew up a *Mémoire* of his expenditures, in a vain attempt to recover some of the wealth he had so heedlessly squandered in the thirty-six hectic years of his life. They mentioned that in the town of Orléans, at that period, "there was great scarcity of viands." We have said that Gilles and all his friends lived at Orléans for over a year, at his expense. They occupied every hotel in the town! They were quartered at *The Gold Cross, The Black Head, Saint George's Crown, The Sign of the Sword, The White Horse, The Great Salmon, The Little Salmon, The Wild Man* and *The God of Love.* Their expense-account was unlimited; anything they chose to purchase, they just put "on the check."

Meanwhile, the performances continued. And here is why there was a scarcity of food. Orléans was after all a little town, and could scarcely have furnished enough of an audience to maintain *The Mystery* for a year. So Gilles invited anyone who cared to come—the performances were free. And they came from all over France and foreign countries, and if they could not afford to make the trip, Gilles forwarded them their expenses. When they got to Orléans, they lodged at his expense. So for an entire year the town of Orléans held open house—at Gilles' expense. The streets were lined with tables, at which there was perpetual banquet, quaffing of hydromel and hippocras, and the finest fish and venison furnished out the feast. It was an orgy unparalleled in human history.

New York thought it was seeing an unprecedented spectacle when a certain opulent but misguided gentleman generously offered a bad play free to all comers, and by his own efforts kept it running for well over a year! His actors would never have played to empty houses had he taken a line from Gilles de Raiz' prompt-book, and offered—not hippocras and hydromel, perhaps, not rare venison or gamey fish, not even lodging and a bed—but merely a free-lunch.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST MURAL

This mural, designed by Rockwell Kent and Jo Mielziner for the Cape Cinema at Dennis on Cape Cod contains five thousand square feet of canvas and is said to be the largest single painting ever attempted. It will vault the ceiling of the theatre decorating the walls upward from the wainscoting.

MURAL BY ROCKWELL KENT

A lobby decoration by Rockwell Kent for the new Cape Cinema at Dennis on Cape Cod. This motion picture house is one of the latest additions to the art center at Dennis, which includes the Cape Playhouse, a new art gallery, cottages for the actors of the permanent company, scenery storehouse and other buildings. Audiences are drawn from the many summer colonies along the cape.

National Theatre

A National Theatre, by Harley Granville-Barker. Sidgwick and Jackson: London. 5s.

THIS is a new comprehensive plan for a National Theatre in England, replacing the scheme and estimates which were drawn up by the author many years ago in collaboration with William Archer. In a spirit of sweet reasonableness, explaining his points or answering objections in bracketed parenthesis after parenthesis, Mr. Granville-Barker sets forth the capital cost of the enterprise, the needs of the theatre in staff and control, the probable receipts and expenses, and all the practical details that can possibly be understood by the theatrical outsider—for whose benefit also is appended the admittedly excellent plan for such a theatre by W. L. Somerville, the Toronto architect. The book is necessarily addressed rather to the general public than to theatre folk. Most of the latter should be convinced already, though there is an element of sharp opposition not only from theatre managers who see the possibility of a new powerful competitor, but from critics and theatre artists who sincerely believe that such an official enterprise would stand in the way of original work by private managements. Any of the chapters, including those on the repertory and its cost, the authors' royalties and the pension fund, and the actual building, apply to any proposal for a National Theatre in any country that does not possess one. Very interesting are the detailed criticisms of the scheme which have been made by managers and others, and are added as an appendix. Most of the critics are practical men, but they tend to ignore one certain asset of a National Theatre, which is prestige. The Comédie Française, however dull and unenterprising it may be, is always well filled. The Burgtheater is called a museum of antiquities by most of the cultivated people in Vienna, but the same number of good playgoers regularly present themselves at its doors. A National Theatre in England, with the prestige of Shakespeare to begin with, might easily be an immense commercial success.

Figaro

Beaumarchais, by René Dalsème, translated by Hannaford Bennett. Putnam's: New York. $5.00.

BEAUMARCHAIS is perhaps the most astonishing and incredible figure in all the noble army of play writers. A watchmaker who conversed freely with Kings, a forger of libels who passionately espoused causes of truth and liberty, a disenfranchised citizen who acted as unofficial liaison officer with foreign powers, a petty trickster who ran an enormous trading company and had forty ships on the high seas, a petted darling of a royal court who wrote fearlessly of the corruption of the nobles, and, finally, a champion of freedom, author of a play which sounded the death knell of the old order, who barely escaped the guillotine and was five times proscribed and outlawed by the people he had helped to liberate. His life, even in the undistinguished biography of René Dalsème, is far more exciting and diverting than his plays, important as they are in the history of the theatre and of its relations to the social order.

The *Marriage of Figaro* suggests to us today little more than the lighter moments of grand opera—soprano trills, white lights, powder, patches, satin knee breeches, silver

and brocades. It is hard to associate its tinsel gaieties with the storming of the Bastille and the red frenzies of the Terror, yet Beaumarchais' play was the prelude to the French Revolution, played, to be sure, on a silver trumpet, but none the less a note of warning—a premonition of deliverance to the people and disaster to the crown. One man at Versailles sensed the menace behind its ready wit and apparent harmlessness. Louis XVI, listening in silence to the first reading of the play, checked the enthusiasm of the Queen and her satellites with a frown: "It is detestable, unactable—it will never be produced!" he exclaimed, and thereupon prohibited its production, to the indignation of the author who saw no harm in his merry masterpiece. The King fought the play for three years, but he could not stem the sinister tide which carried Figaro, gay and débonaire, on its crest. In the end he succumbed to the pleadings of Marie Antoinette and his brother the Comte d'Artois, who was in love with Louise Contat, creator of the role of Suzanne, and had had the play rehearsed several times in his own palace. The *Marriage of Figaro* was produced by the Comédie Française on February 27, 1785. One of the most brilliant audiences that ever assembled in a public theatre greeted the long awaited première. The lords and ladies of the old régime, brilliant as birds of Paradise, chattering gaily, and all unconscious of their impending doom, applauded Figaro's sallies and listened amiably to his attack on the sacrosanct rights of privilege: "Because you are a great lord you fancy yourself a genius," the impudent barber-valet exclaims, "Nobility, fortune, rank, place—all these things make you proud. But what have you done to deserve them? You have put yourself to the trouble of being born, nothing more!" Figaro was greeted with cheers and abuse, with admiration and fury, with a storm of polemics for and against, which is only comprehensible if we understand the times —and the author. And for this we can turn to M. Dalsème's life which gives for the first time in English a fairly complete account of this extraordinary man.

Pierre Augustin Caron, the watchmaker's son who took the name of Beaumarchais when he stepped into courtly circles was Figaro himself, a lively irrepressible, adventurous jack-of-all trades with a supreme gift of eloquence. The theatre was his natural medium of expression, and the theatre has made him immortal, but he gave only a small portion of his time and energy to writing and staging his plays, and only two of them have survived—*The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. In these plays Beaumarchais re-introduced into the French theatre the comedy of intrigue which Molière's comedy of types had almost eliminated. It was the lively plots of his plays, the irresistible complication of events, as well as their spirited dialogue and the charm of their characters that delighted and surprised their first audiences. Figaro himself is Beaumarchais' master-creation. In this super-valet, this surgeon-adventurer, this man of the people turned philosopher and *deus ex machina,* Beaumarchais incorporated the ideal conception of the plebian —the proletarian of his day. He did it gracefully and lightly, laughing as he hacked at the roots of aristocratic power, exalting his devil of a valet on an edifice of witty sayings, spiced dialogue and hair-brained adventure. He never dreamed that this warm hearted, canny and good-natured creature would lead his world through the bloody carmagnole of the Terror.

Though Beaumarchais is remembered for his plays, his life was chiefly occupied in a series of intricate business ventures and a bewildering complexity of law suits. He broke into Louis XV's court, first as watchmaker to the King, then as music master to the Royal Princesses. There he bought himself a lucrative charge, entered into business dealings with Pâris Duverney and gradually made himself a position in that corrupt and supercilious society which surrounded the King. A lawsuit in which the right was undoubtedly on his side, went against him and he began writing those Memorials which were so brilliantly satiric and witty that Voltaire trembled for his laurels. Disgraced by the judgment against him, he went to London on a shady mission concerned with libels, and when libels were lacking, invented them himself. He had dealings with that grotesque creature the Chevalier d'Eon, the man-woman spy and blackmailer who haunted pre-revolutionary affairs. While in England he became fired with enthusiasm for the cause of American

liberty, and we have the extraordinary picture of an outlawed citizen closeted with the King of France in conference on no less a subject than French intervention on behalf of England's rebellious colonies. Beaumarchais was thoroughly conversant with the subject and warmly on the side of the colonists. Louis XV allotted him one million francs from the royal treasury to found a company which should trade with the colonies, and in the pursuit of this gigantic enterprise, Beaumarchais, at last restored to citizenship, equipped forty ships and sent no less than six million dollars' worth of goods to America for which he was never paid. The outbreak of the French Revolution, his dealings with the changing home governments, his escape from death, his exile and final homecoming end the tale as dramatically as it began. M. Dalsème has assembled a vast amount of material into a readable whole. It is unfortunate that he has felt it necessary to novelize his story even as much as he has. The picture is sufficiently arresting without the titivating brush of the restorer, but on the whole his book is interesting and valuable and the index and pictures added to its American edition increase its general usefulness.

VIRGIL GEDDES

The Earth Between and Behind the Night, by Virgil Geddes. Samuel French: New York. $1.75.

THOSE who are interested in the future of American drama will be grateful to Samuel French for publishing these plays and to Barrett Clark for championing in an introductory note Mr. Geddes' work. The reading of the plays leaves no doubt that their author has gifts far above the average. It bears out the impression made by the production of *The Earth Between* for a few nights at the Provincetown Playhouse in the winter of 1929. Mr. Geddes' dialogue is remarkably compressed, meaningful and intensely alive. For the most part his characters are convincing. Particularly in *The Earth Between* do dialogue and character blend with place-atmosphere to give a unified and compelling effect. Only a poet's mind could achieve such a synthesis.

Mr. Geddes is obviously at the beginning of really significant achievements. So far he has not given his talent wide enough sweep. His themes and his treatment of them have seemed cabined and confined. Occasionally, too, in his effort to obtain poetic effect he has allowed his character to be unconvincing, as in *Behind the Night* Mildred (an inmate of a house of prostitution) asks of Bartell: "I am the woman you seek for in your dreams?" and then apologizes for this poeticism in an aside: "God, he makes me talk like a minister."

Should Mr. Geddes, encouraged by the *succes d'estime* of *The Earth Between* attack an important dramatic idea with the same economy of dialogue but with the purpose of achieving a fully rounded and quite complete play, there is little doubt that he would immediately take his place as one of America's foremost dramatists.

OTHER NEW BOOKS

The Pageant of America, by Oral Sumner Coad and Edwin Mims, Jr. Yale University Press: New Haven. Vol. 14.

THE AMERICAN STAGE is one volume of the elaborate *Pageant of America,* issued by Yale University, containing a pictorial and textual record of our history. The frontispiece is a portrait of George H. Hill as Hiram Dodge in that early American comedy, *The Yankee Pedlar.* On the last page of the book are two pictures, number 1026 and 1027; the first is a setting by Sam Hume for a performance of the *Romance of the Rose* at the defunct Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit, the second, a set by Rollo Peters for Jane Cowl's production of *Romeo and Juliet.* In the three hundred and fifty pages between these pictures is a vast, amusing and useful, if not too well organized, hodge-podge of notes on the highlights of the American theatre and biography of theatre folk. As you run through the pages quickly, you get a frightened and frightful sense that this is the way the American theatre has really looked in the years since it began, so much that is borrowed, so much that is bad, and at the same time, so much that is brave and gay and forward looking. If you want only the best in your history and interpretation of

the theatre, you will not need this book, but it will take the place of many records and biographies on a theatre bookshelf.

German Plays of the 19th Century, by T. M. Campbell. Crofts: New York. $4.00.

JUST when you have made up your mind that you will never, under any circumstances, add another compilation to your books of plays, but that you will pick and choose your own singly, comes a volume of German plays of the nineteenth century to fill a real need. The plays, twelve of them, ranging from Tieck's *Der Gestiefelte Kater,* through Kleist and Grillparzer and Hebbel, to Hauptmann's *Einsame Menschen,* give well the range of the century. The plays are printed in German but are supplemented by an exceedingly useful introduction by the editor, Thomas Moody Campbell, and by a useful bibliography and a chronological list of the important plays that came to life either in book form or on the stage in Germany during the century.

Producing Plays, by C. B. Purdom. Dutton: N. Y. $2.50. Creative Dramatics, by Winifred Ward. Appleton: N. Y. $2.25. Make-Up, by John F. Baird. Samuel French: N. Y. $1.50

THESE three books are written primarily for active workers in the theatre, especially for Little Theatre workers. They are technical and practical in their discussion of theatre problems. Mr. Purdom in his book *Producing Plays* writes, however, of a few of the esthetic problems that must be dealt with by a capaple producer as well as the innumerable details of mechanism that must be mastered. *Producing Plays* is a handbook for the amateur director filled with sound artistic advice and suggestions for solving material difficulties. "What the producer needs to know about the stage," Mr. Purdom says, "amounts to exactly everything there is to know . . . the producer's function is somewhat similar to that of the conductor of an orchestra. He determines the pace, emphasis, form and spirit of the work given him. Unlike the conductor, he is not seen at the performance and may not even be present; but his influence should be as unmistakable." From this statement of the producer's function he continues to explain in detail all that the producer must consider from the choice of a play and management of a cast to the use of lighting and make-up. Miss Ward's *Creative Dramatics* is also a complete guide for a producer or coach, but applies only to children's theatres and grade school and high school dramatics. Miss Ward, who is the supervisor of dramatics in the public schools of Evanston, Illinois, as well as an instructor in dramatic production at Northwestern University, writes of the problems and her solutions in six years of supervising children's dramatics. She discusses not only play production but festivals and assembly programs as well. Complete instructions on how to make-up told in simple and concise language make John Baird's book *Make-Up* valuable to the novice on the stage. The process of making-up for practically every type of face is described step-by-step in this little manual.

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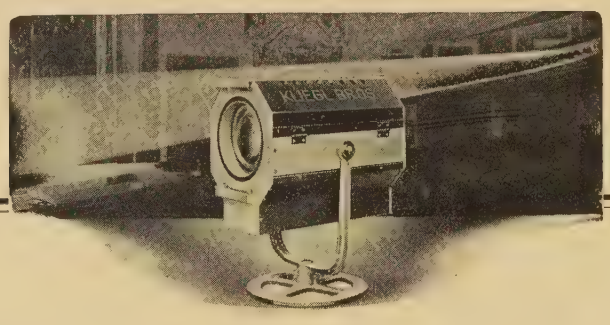

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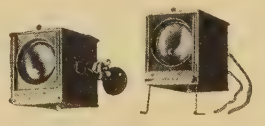

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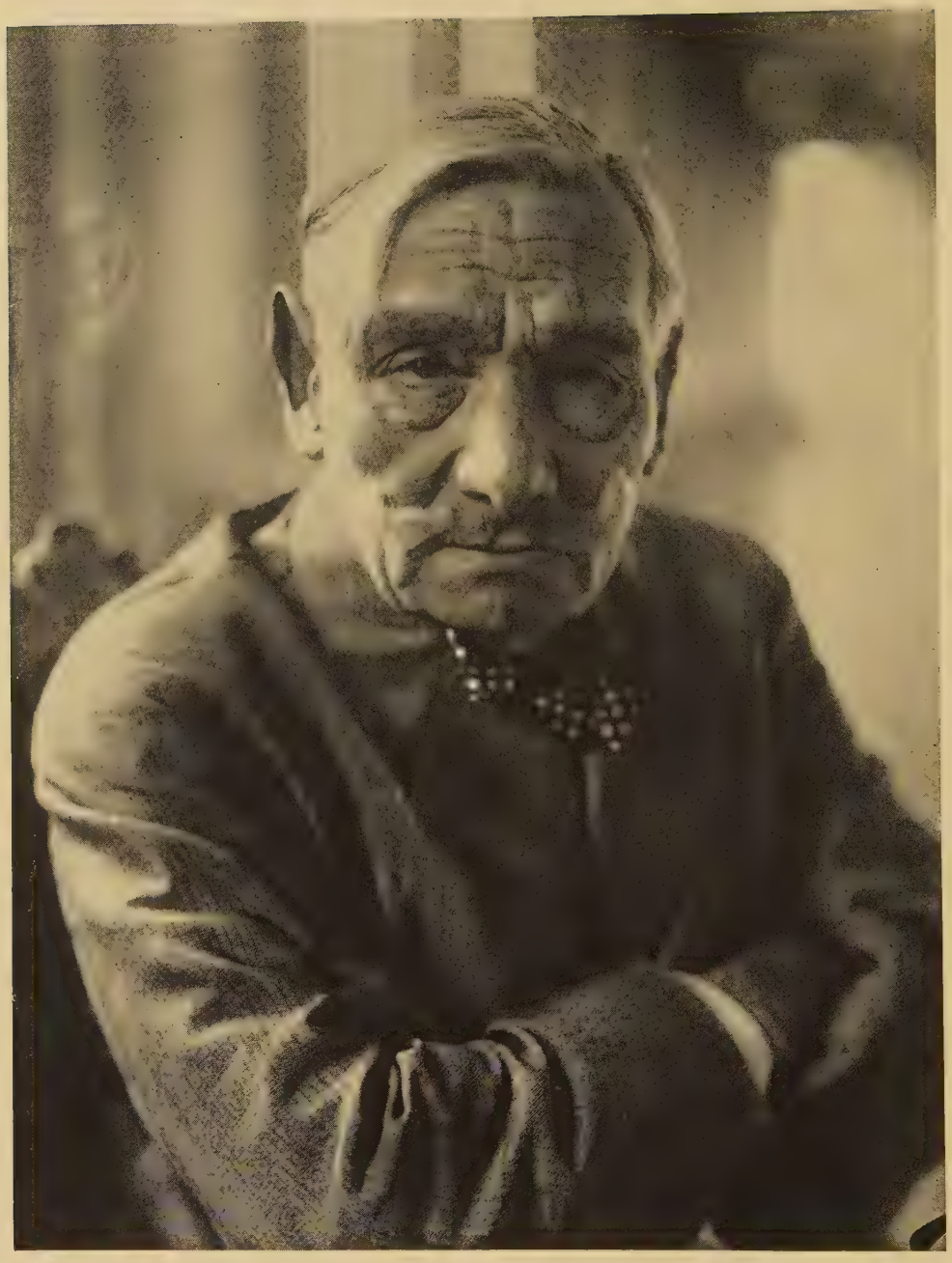

MAURICE DE FÉRAUDY

Dean of the actors of the Comédie Française who has now retired. (*Photograph by Gilbert René, Paris*)

The WORLD and the THEATRE

De Féraudy — The Genius of Racine — Reinhardt's Satire on Movies

MAURICE DE FÉRAUDY, dean of the players of the Comédie-Française, has just bidden farewell to the theatre. Féraudy was the nephew of Got and from the day that he made his debut at the Comédie in 1880, had the advantage of the friendly discipline of this distinguished master. André Antoine, writing the account of Féraudy's farewell performance, says of him, "What characterized Féraudy's career is that unlike many of his elders who confined themselves to repertoire of seventeenth and eighteenth century plays in which they shone, Féraudy, as soon as his hands were free, dedicated himself with ardor to the cause of the new generation. He was the devoted advocate of Brieux, Courteline, François de Curel, Maurice Donnay, Henry Becque, Lavedan, Henry Bataille and contributed no little in the establishment of their works."

JEAN GIRAUDOUX, who is best known in the theatre for *Siegfried* and *Amphitryon 38,* but who has been for some years among the most considered of the younger men of letters

A design by Sidney Feld

The brilliant iconoclastic Russian stage director, Vsevolod Meierhold, with his entire company and the staff and repertory of the Moscow State Theatre will come to New York during the coming season according to the announcement of Sidney Ross who will thereby initiate his first independent season as a theatrical producer. Meierhold, a charter member of the Moscow Art Theatre and for a long time Europe's most revolutionary theatrical director, has caused storms of controversy by his productions at Moscow and Berlin and his recent engagement at the Théâtre Montparnasse, Paris, sponsored by young French directors including Gaston Baty, Dullin, Jouvet and Pitoëff.

Leslie Howard, English star of *Berkeley Square,* recently completed work in the talking picture version of Sutton Vane's *Outward Bound.* In a recent issue of the New York *Review* Mr. Howard is quoted as saying: ". . . We worked with the original script making no changes in the dialogue and preserving the true flavor of the original production. . . . To my way of thinking the Vitaphone production is as good as, if not better than, the legitimate play." This comment from a British actor and playwright augurs well for the future of the drama in the talking picture. So does the announcement that Stuart Walker, one of America's most idealistic stage producers, has contracted to direct talking pictures. The belief of these men in the talkies is not shared by a number of French critics whose opinions were reported by Phillip Carr in the Sunday New York *Times* for July 20. Mr. Carr quotes René Fauchois as saying that the actors in the cinema are dead. "The audience is looking at and listening to, not what they are doing, but what they have done some time ago; and no reaction from the public can modify their performance by a hair's breadth." To Pierre Wolff is attributed the statement that "whatever its mechanical progress may be, the cinema can never be anything but mechanical." Pierre Brisson joins the ranks of the opposition, according to Mr. Carr, by declaring that Jean Giraudoux's *Siegfried* "contains much more subtlety than any film we have met up till now." The creator of *Topaze* and *Marius,* however, disagrees with his countrymen. Monsieur Pagnol seems in accord with British Mr. Howard and American Mr. Walker.

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While plans for the New York season are well under way and many plays have already been announced, what plays are to appear in London still remains pretty much of a mystery. One London manager who has four theatres is reported to have nothing in sight for the autumn season.

in France, has made a keen analysis of the literary mind, especially in its approach to the theatre, in a study of Racine in *La Nouvelle Revue Française.* To extract a paragraph, and phrases here and there, from such a finely thought out and carefully developed thesis is not a kindly thing to do, but perhaps what follows may carry readers back to the whole brilliant article:

"Those who believe in genius have the opportunity, when contemplating Racine, to verify the fact that a civilization which has reached its pinnacle . . . is itself a genius—the genius of Pericles or of Louis XIV. . . . One of its virtues is that, instead of the smaller means by which writers in less complete epochs acquire their experience—misfortune, observations of men in daily life, affairs of the heart or conjugal crises—there is substituted in these happier periods, an instinctive knowledge of great spirits and great moments. Racine is the most perfect illustration of this. No childhood was further removed than his from the laws of childhood. . . . His adolescence was not less theoretical. . . . Studying and the joys of studying were to him the substitutes for all contact with life, all happiness, all catastrophes, up to the day when he entered a world even more devoid of steadiness: the theatre. He knew people and actions only in fancy-dress. Yet, from the contact of this young man without youth and this artificial society, was suddenly born the most direct and most realistic work of the century.

Aesthetic laws are, no doubt, as rigid

as mathematical laws: Racine evolves his discoveries about human beings with an abstraction, a detachment from humanity as lofty as the indifference of the geometrician for the family life of figures. There is not one sentiment in Racine that is not a literary sentiment. . . . Nothing in him is visionary or real, frantic or discouraged. His bitterness, when he is bitter, does not come from his being lame or imposed upon; his mellowness from being at peace; his power from being athletic—but from his being a writer.

His method, his only method, consists in taking from the outside, through style and poetics, as through a fish-net, a catch of truths of which he himself only suspects the presence. . . . The yeast of his talent is purely literary. Not only did Racine never take his inspiration from the questions that the intellectual currents . . . urged upon his time . . . but he did not let even one of them touch his inner life. . . .

There was no "question of the theatre" at the time Racine began to write. . . . It would have irritated him, moreover, to waste time in reforms and innovations. The theatre is a microcosm where the poetical, moral and material preferences and tastes of an age should shine forth in their greatest splendor and passions, but the theatre cannot create perceptions in the spectator; it takes them for granted. A literary generation, a literary age, can end with a theatrical era but never starts with one. Good drama is an accumulation of perfections; although

Audiences have been putting on very bad performances of late. During the week's program at the German Dance Congress in Munich (John Martin reports in the New York *Times*), "a cruel and misbehaved audience" hissed dances which they did not approve and "rudeness on the part of the audience reached a new high level." In Berlin at the première of Luigi Pirandello's new play, *Tonight We Play Extemporaneously,* the real audience entered into the spirit of the piece with such vigor, and supplemented the playing of the "planted" audience with such gusto, that for a time the production was halted.

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The Shakespeare Guild of America which has for one of its purposes the bringing back of Shakespeare revivals to the road, has organized a company to begin a transcontinental tour in September with a repertory including *Hamlet* (in both classical and modern dress), *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merchant of Venice.*

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The Diaghilev Period, a highly significant and authoritative article by Lincoln Kirstein, appears in the summer issue of *The Hound and Horn.* It is a thorough study of the great Russian's influence and intrinsic importance, a valuable contribution to modern dance criticism.

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Berlin is proving most hospitable to modern opera. Claudel's *Christopher Columbus* received its first performance there and it is now reported that the German capital is to see the première of a new work by Darius Milhaud based on the life of the emperor Maximilian of Mexico.

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The Association of Friends of the Conservatory (Paris), according to an announcement in *L'Ami du Peuple,* has offered a prize for the best opera comique in one act. The contest requirements are that the work shall be very gay but without vulgarity, and that it be a comedy of intrigue. Thesis comedies, philosophic or symbolic comedies are barred from competition.

One of the latest victims pounced upon by the German censor is Micky Mouse of the motion picture animated cartoons. Micky's offense lies in his having donned a French kepi and waged a victorious war against the cats clad chiefly in German steel helmets. This we have on the authority of the *Berliner Tageblatt* which adds that the censor bases his decision on the belief that showing Micky in the trenches might renew antagonism toward Germany among foreign nations and that it might be prejudicial to German patriotism. The *Tageblatt* admonishes Micky to mingle no more with soldiers but to stay at home with his saxophone. War, it says, is a dangerous business, especially if one has to deal with the gentlemen of the censorship.

The New York Theatre Guild has done its bit this season toward the establishment of a national drama by accepting for production seven plays by American authors.

American audiences are to see four new Pirandello plays in the near future according to an announcement of the Shuberts who have contracted for them. Two of these, *Tonight We Improvise* and *As You Want Me* are already completed. The other two, on which the author is still working, are *The Giants of the Mountain* and *When You Are Somebody.*

New plays added to the program of the Civic Repertory Theatre this season are *The Nobel Prize,* a comedy by Hjalmar Bergman, translated by Herman Bernstein, *Alice in Wonderland,* adapted by Florida Friebus, Ibsen's *Rosmersholm,* and *Gruach* by Gordon Bottomley which will be preceded by *Ardvorlich's Wife,* by the same author, as a curtain raiser.

The London season saw no less than five delineations of *Hamlet.* Gerard Lawrence was the last to play the melancholy prince, having been preceded by Henry Ainley, Esme Percy, Alexander Moissi and John Gielgud.

the reader may look for new discoveries in the course of his reading, the spectator wants only enjoyment from his spectacle. This excludes from the theatre every manifestation which is only a quest or a lesson; which does not instinctively embrace dramatic life such as actuality has created it. . . . Great drama is the drama which convinces minds already convinced, moves souls already shaken, dazzles eyes already enlightened. It is as a student submitting to the customs and the laws of its genre that Racine came to the theatre."

NOBODY will ever know whether Fritz von Unruh wrote a good satirical comedy in *Phaea* or not unless somebody besides Max Reinhardt produces it. For Reinhardt in his production at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin has used the story of a Hollywood love affair to build up such a brilliant satire on moving picture technique that it must stand forever as a master joke of its kind. All the extravagance, the falsity, the ugliness of the worst cinema is there on that huge revolving stage, which turns as fast as a camera can, while the actors and actresses step on and off, up and down stairs, past numberless rooms, into cotton-snow clad forests, and through streets with real running rivers. Whatever you can do on the film, Reinhardt seems to say, you can do on the stage—if you want to, and if you know how. Many of the best players of his company aid the production in which Grete Mosheim has made an outstanding success.

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The Garrick Gaieties have been amusing New York summer audiences with intelligent satire and clever lyrics. Above, a moment in *Uncle Sea Gull* caricaturing the gloom of the Russian drama. Left, Edith Meiser and Albert Carroll in a bit of fooling involving some well known European monarchs. (*Photographs by Vandamm*)

Karsavina and Harold Turner with the Marie Rambert Dancers (in the foreground) in the recent London production of *Les Sylphides* at the Lyric, Hammersmith. (*Photograph by Armand Console*)

Marie Rambert and Harold Turner in *Our Lady's Juggler,* another of the ballets on the program arranged by Madame Rambert for Karsavina and the Marie Rambert Dancers, successfully presented for a fortnight at the Lyric, Hammersmith. (*Photograph by Armand Console*)

Two scenes from the popular London revival of Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem*. Above, the capture of Gibbet and his accomplices in the bedroom of Mrs. Sullen. (*Photograph by Sasha*) Left, Edith Evans as Mrs. Sullen and Miles Malleson as Scrub. (*Photograph by Stage Photo Company*)

THE LONDON SCENE

The English Theatre Holds Its Own

By Ashley Dukes

THE International Season arranged by Maurice Browne and C. B. Cochran has come and gone. It included Alexander Moissi in *Hamlet* and *The Living Corpse,* the Pitoëffs in *Sainte Jeanne* and *La Dame Aux Camelias,* and a company of Japanese Players with Tokujiro Tsutsui at their head. Truly an ambitious series of productions, for which London should be grateful, and it would be churlish to insist that the season did not include Max Reinhardt and his company of the Deutsches Theater, or either Tairoff or Meierhold, both of whom have been playing this summer no further away than Paris. A full comparison of English and foreign acting and direction has not been possible; but as far as the limited comparison goes, England certainly has nothing to fear. Moissi's Hamlet by no means towered above that of John Gielgud at a theatre a few doors away; and few of those who had seen the English *Saint Joan* were disposed to accept Ludmilla Pitoëff's playing of the part, or even George Pitoëff's *mise-en-scène,* as essentially satisfying interpretations. The Japanese Players had a deserved little success of their own, for they certainly showed us something that cannot be seen every day, and above all they produced the physical vitality of the actor in all its bloom of dancing, swordsmanship, voice and gesture.

Still we must grant that an International Season without Reinhardt is rather like a performance of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. During these same few weeks the German director was celebrating his twenty-fifth anniversary of management at the Deutsches Theater, or rather his actors and public were celebrating it for him, for such an occasion could not be allowed to pass without notice. That occasion too has come and gone, but an enduring record of it exists in the book *Max Reinhardt; 25 Jahre Deutsches Theater* (R. Piper Verlag, Munich), edited by Hans Rothe, chief Dramaturg of the theatre and an author well-known for his new

translations of Shakespeare. This history of a quarter-century's work is in effect a history of the theatre of our own time. Reinhardt came in 1905 to a stage restless with thought, thanks to its contact with the minds of two generations of distinguished writers. An actor himself, he saw from the first that it could not be nourished by literature alone—even if that literature were the highest dramatic poetry. He foresaw the growth of film from its crude beginnings into a vast substitute-drama and substitute-theatre, *eine Ersatzkunst,* as the Germans say, which for the great multitudes in all the continents would be the only known form of dramatic entertainment. He foresaw a thinning of theatrical blood by the physical removal of acting talent to this new sphere, and a still greater danger of a growing imaginative poverty and dramatic impotence to mirror the tremendous drama of outward life in this first quarter of a tremendous century. To use his own phrase, "Human creative power now streams through other channels" than those of the theatre.

The remedy he felt to be first and foremost in the re-creation of the actor's theatre. Landscapes and palaces can be brought into being by a poet's words, but best of all if the poet, like Shakespeare, be himself an actor. Thoughts can be expressed by a philosopher's dialogue, but best of all if the philosopher, like Shaw, be himself a playwright with the acting sense. The dramatists' theatre pure and simple, by which is meant the theatre intended for the expression of the dramatist's individual mind, received a definite check from the moment of Reinhardt's appearance on the scene. Others, like Gordon Craig, had anticipated the new theatrical movement, and were entitled to more credit for it than they are ever likely to receive; but this man of will and energy soon established himself as a practising director with playhouses of his own, and his achievement can be studied in the two or three hundred illustrations of this *Reinhardt-Buch,* with its companion volume of consecutive records of plays, authors, casts, directors and designers. Clearly no other theatre artist can boast of such an accomplishment (and Reinhardt does not boast, but always settles down quietly to work upon a new production).

This man's work is open to many criticisms; there will be time enough for those when he joins an International Season in London or again in New York. But his twenty-fifth anniversary as a Berlin director reminds us of the length and breadth of his achievement.

It reminds us, too, that the issues he has raised are old issues, and not new ones, as some of our critics to-day would have us believe. For a quarter of a century a practical shape has been given in Middle Europe to the new theatrical movement. For a quarter of a century writers and actors and artists of the theatre have united in regarding the stage as something other than a dramatists' platform, and theatrical audiences have been able to study their work and see that it is good.

Nowadays it is the everyday and rather conservative theatre that thinks in terms of drama and dramatists alone. Gilbert Miller for instance, who must be reckoned a producing director of intelligence, thinks in terms of Ferenc Molnar and would Molnarize us all if he could. This adroit Hungarian, the spirit of "theatre", fascinates him, and once again he tries to introduce to London the Molnar blend of fancy and colour and skilful presentation that has already been popular in New York. The play is *The Swan*, a comedy of royalty, and we ask ourselves whether it contains a single line or scene that does not date from the eighteen-nineties. The second act especially, with its royal supper-party and processions of footmen, seems to belong to the dullest and most pompous tradition of the St. James's Theatre, where the piece is played. The dialogue itself, in English, is undistinguished stuff, though Gilbert Miller is loyal enough in his hero-worship to put Molnar's name alone on the playbill and implicitly to deny the touch of an adaptor's hand. (Hitherto the excuse for Molnar has always been that his translators ruined him, but this time fidelity is vouched for.) Is there anything at all in *The Swan* or must Molnar be set down as one more of the geese in whom producing directors are so often mistaken? I asked this by no means for the first time, remembering a brilliant performance of *Spiel Im Schloss* in Vienna and a dull affair called *The Play's the Thing* in London—also an entertaining though superficial *Leibgardist* in Berlin and a deadly *Guardsman* in New York and London. The truth perhaps is that Molnar expresses coarsely and effectively the theatrical movement in the dramatist's mind. He knows that the world of drama (notwithstanding Shaw) has not stood still since the days of Ibsen and Tchekov. However commonplace his material, he knows how to present it to the best advantage of his players. And with Herbert Marshall, Edna Best and Irene Vanbrugh, playing to an immaculate house, which itself includes a royalty or two, he achieves what

must be his ideal performance. *The Swan* is a glittering goose; it should dispose of the Molnar legend once for all.

Meantime the critical world is bidden to the second play of R. C. Sherriff, author of *Journey's End*, and it proves to be a bluff and hearty piece about an English village threatened with what is called "development", and the struggle of the more influential inhabitants against the developer, all culminating in a village cricket match. The theme is genuine; the treatment is shrewd and good-natured; but this is scarcely a play by which a management should elect to stand or fall. No one supposes that it would ever have been produced, but for a success made by the earlier piece; and it is no service to Sherriff or the play or the theatre in general to introduce the element of general press discussion into the affair. I should say that the less the fierce light of publicity beats upon the management of Maurice Browne, the better the work it will accomplish. This management was made famous against its desire, and rich perhaps against its will. Now it must struggle against the necessity (imposed by fame and riches) of trying to make an impression on the theatre from above instead of from below—that is to conduct expensive operations in the West End of London and produce play after play in an elaborate fashion, necessarily proclaiming each to be a masterpiece, instead of going quietly and almost anonymously to work in some suburb or provincial town, or some corner of Central London, building up the real theatrical audience of the future in complete independence of the film and ordinary commerce. It is nobody's fault, least of all Maurice Browne's, that this necessity should have been imposed upon the producers of *Journey's End*. But it is true, especially in this world of the theatre, that every success carries some penalty. An actor slips into some groove of convention, an author may take years to live his reputation down, and a management finds Napoleonic schemes of conquest thrust upon it inevitably as by the hand of Fate. For theatre's sake let us all try *not* to be Napoleonic; that gesture can be left to films.

This being the first time for many years that there has been no Russian Ballet in London at the height of the season (in June and July), the Marie Rambert Dancers with Karsavina at their head gave a very successful fortnight at the Lyric, Hammersmith. A revival of *Les Sylphides* was their classic achievement, and altogether they proved that ballet can rely on dancing alone, the musical and scenic accompaniment being of the simplest. The

modern side was represented by *Our Lady's Juggler* (choregraphy by Susan Salaman, music by Respighi), *Capriol Suite* (choregraphy by Frederick Ashton, music by Peter Warlock), and *Le Rugby*, an amusing football ballet (Poulenc). Here is the beginning of a new permanent company of dancers, who derive from the tradition of the Maestro Cecchetti and are trained in his method.

The revival of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, also at the Lyric, Hammersmith, is surely the best that has been given of Wilde's masterpiece. Nigel Playfair had the capital idea of a black-and-white production, instead of the realistic rendering, overburdened with Victorian furniture in the interior scenes and pink roses in the garden act, that we have seen in half a dozen previous revivals. And having had this idea, he felt it necessary to attribute the setting to Beardsley, which is perhaps a pity. As soon as Beardsley's name is mentioned the thing becomes derivative, whereas in reality it stands very well on its own merits, thanks to the excellent work of the young designer, Michael Weight. But the main point is that the new setting points the gaiety and triviality of the piece, and makes much easier the task of the black-and-white-clad players, except in the celebrated moment of John Worthing's entrance in deep mourning for his imaginary brother, which loses some of its comic effect from black-and-white all around. John Gielgud and Mabel Terry-Lewis are the high comedians of the company, beautifully catching every tone of brilliance in the dialogue. So Wilde comes into his own again after some neglect, and it is clear that good plays like good soldiers never die, they "only fade away", and can be preserved from fading by the right treatment. Even *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a much inferior piece, enjoys a second flowering at the Everyman.

The end of the season finds modern English comedy holding its own among the foreign plays and players and the many revivals. Neil Grant's *Petticoat Influence* at the St. Martin's, with Diana Wynyard and Nigel Playfair, is a decided success for all concerned. *The First Mrs. Fraser* passes its anniversary at the Haymarket, and *The Middle Watch* has lasted nearly as long. And *The Beaux' Stratagem*, though itself one of the revivals, defines the style and gives the tone of pure theatre for which audiences are looking more and more. Most of the plays that succeed are well written; most of those that fail are inarticulate as the talkies. The listening audience grows.

I LOOK AT THE THEATRE

With a Painter's Eye

By C. R. W. Nevinson

I AM the most curious man to pick on to write an article on the theatre, as nowadays I rarely go to the theatre—though I always mean to. Within the last two or three years I have been to two or three plays in London, one music-hall in Paris, one film, two talkies and one revue. I am simply one of those innumerable males that never get to the theatre. I am alone all day and I seldom see a soul until six o'clock, so I go out at night and meet people, talk with men, drink with fools, pursue good-lookers or dance with the mutes, only invariably to drift back and begin talking to men again.

I suppose I know so many men and so many classes and types, such intellectual ones or such tough rough ones, such radical ones or such exquisite Etonian ones, that the theatre is now not for me, slithering away from all reality on the one hand, and on the other, not developing the abstract or releasing the sub-conscious or unconscious manifestations of the human mind or soul which are "Sur-Realist," or above and beyond Realism.

But how different it was when our Queen Victoria lived. Then I seemed to live in the theatre, the circus or the music-hall. I was very young then, perhaps too young, but I seem to have been bred in an atmosphere of clowns, fat horses, fine big "girls" and singers, and then more singers, dreary dark caverns of theatres, endless waits, rehearsals, and then more singers. As a boy I was always about the theatre.

After a brief misery at an English public school, off I went to an art school and until the war I do not suppose I spent two days without being in contact with things theatrical, both back and front. For years the theatre and music-hall was a greater reality to me than life around me—that is to say life was to me always "just like the stage." Limelight was more like the sun, the back-cloth more than the rustic scene, and the actors and actresses—on or off—more

real than the art students around me with whom I worked. I seemed always hanging around in Europe or America with the "pro" or the circus or music-hall bunch which, curiously enough, rather looked down on the "legit."

I have travelled with "freak" impresarios. In Paris years ago I always called around to start my midnight amusements in Montmartre with a cockney and Italian clown from Medrano's.

The only time in those days an Englishman in Europe could feel really proud of his nation and the only homage paid to it was when the Blackpool or Oldham dancing "girls" came strutting and cutting their way through with knife-edge precision into the floppy, semi-nude shows of Paris or Berlin. It was always then that I was proud of being English and delighted that I had associated with the one profession which has made England respected in Europe.

Later when, at a tender age, I decided to chuck painting and became a reporter, I tried to interview Little Tich and Marie Lloyd on their besetting sin. That nearly broke my association with the stage.

I had no ambition to go on the stage—for which many besides myself should be grateful—simply most of my girls were theatrical, and clowns and those poor miserable wretches that make others roar and howl with laughter have always been my friends. Perhaps I myself am one of those fools. I know that whenever I am arranging myself in the gas oven to end my blank and futile existence, the telephone bell rings and I am asked out to "buck someone up" and make them feel "happy and courageous," and I always go—like a conscientious comedian. When I am overwhelmed with the meanness of my brother-artists or the chicanery of art officials, or the mercenary pettiness of art "experts" or the general dirtiness of art intrigues and politics, some doctor, mental or nervous expert, comes up to inform me how nice it is to hear my laugh and to see a man so carefree and so lacking in morbidity and completely without nerves.

Perhaps this love of wearing the grinning mask is my link with drama: my inborn showmanship which compels me to "act brave" before the jeering mob, my link with the "tamer"—though a roaring lion is a clean decent animal compared with "the public", which also only becomes "brave" if its tamer shows fear. However, in the end tamers usually get devoured by the lion, and most artists killed by the public—a point bringing me back to the theatre.

As I look at the theatre I see it has been killed by the public. Democracy kills all art; the reason pictorial art is to-day the most advanced, the most esoteric, the most free, is simply and solely because painters have shed the public.

Science is at present in much the same position; a knowledge of science demands the use of brains; it hurts the public to think, therefore science is left severely alone to develop.

The arts do not require brains, they demand a more sensitive emotional reaction and development of the human mind or soul, an asset far above the human mind or the scientist's logic or the politician's craft.

The arts are to humanity what the super-charger is to the automobile. All the public needs is a Ford assembled at the grocer's from the necessary packets (and very good too), but it cannot compare with a super-charged Mercedes, the best, but not for democracy.

Until the theatre really settles down to a similar view, the theatre of to-day will never advance as a dramatic force. Let the mass have its wireless, its talking and be-coloured films, its novelettes, its television, its camera, its gramophone, all the cheap forms of mass production, distortion and reproduction, the necessary schoolboy knowledge of mechanics. Then from the lack of public support will a theatre of to-day develop. Everyday democracy loves to interfere with the higher attainments of humanity, and politicians to curry favour with the majority will attempt to create a National Theatre, an edifice for official intrigue, conservatism and pomposity.

As I look at the theatre of to-day these are its two dangers, the great huge mass-produced public expecting to be amused for a shilling or two, and the modern state with its love of destruction of the first rate and the spending of other people's money in order to "educate" the uneducatable. The art of the theatre is neither an amusement nor an education.

The French theatre has completely died through its attempts at amusement only. The English theatre is now didactic and tedious —largely thanks to Shaw—in its attempts to make art educational or moral. A good moral does not necessarily make a good play. A good education does not produce or appreciate good art. The actors and actresses should be "rogues and vagabonds" and the dramatists still further outside society. When Holy Bernard Shaw

accused painters of being "thieves, beggars, dopers and drunkards, born for a suicide's grave", he forgot dramatic authors, and was merely giving vent to his puritanical, bourgeois and British hatred of all artists and their incapacity to fit in with the herd and "the state." He also forgot and probably is incapable of understanding the artists' love of beauty, their religion, their idealism for which there is little reward, as a rule, much as a priest can hardly expect to make a fortune.

But as a painter, on the other hand, I am always overwhelmed at the terrible poverty of the theatre—the dozens of men I have known who have made fortunes on the stage only to be humbly borrowing the price of a drink within five years. The women come off a bit better because they usually marry before it is too late. The managers usually seem to suffer, the commercial managers the most; in fact, the whole ambience of the theatre seems to be ground down with poverty and distress. I know no crueller world. Only a few "highbrows" have made money out of the theatre, because they are supported by enthusiasts and not by the public. Generally all the commercial gentry who give the public what it wants keep on giving it until they are "commercial" no more, and the public "wants" them. Nearly everyone else fades away into the vilest poverty surrounded with a sordidness that only the theatre can manufacture.

As the mechanical means of reproduction, distribution, distortion and the elimination of space increases, the chances of the commercial theatre will still further decrease. The public naturally prefer the bad, and a bad song or a bad play or a bad novelette badly reproduced by mechanical means will be doubly welcome, just as in the past the commercial theatre always lost in the end because of the arrival of a still more commercial, and still more degraded one.

It stands to reason we can hope that soon the theatre will come back to its own supported by only those who like the theatre as much as the artists, much as painters are now only supported by a tiny public who like pictures well enough to buy them.

There will be soon a theatre for adults who love to listen instead of a ghastly gallery bunch of girls who can see nothing but a dirty joke or that inane tribe of squaws who haunt the stage-door, expecting inanities and more inanities for one shilling, and boo and boo at first nights if they do not get them, or because, as one girl told

me, a lot of words "were talked which nobody understands nothing of." (The vast majority of critics take their cue from this "top shelf".) This public must be got out of the theatre, put back again into the circus, the freak show, the talkies and the music hall—places of amusement full of the beauty of folk-lore and folk music and the old public love of cruelty and sexual buffoonery—then will the drama develop as an art.

I wish myself that there would be one theatre for men only. The average woman or girl who goes to the theatre is "only sublimating", seeking compensation, and is a sort of Barrie fairy with a Peter Pan mind. How can the art of the theatre develop with such patrons? With an audience of men I think both actors and actresses, even authors, would get a chance. However, in the end, the drama is bound once more to become a vital art fit for adults of both sexes who know life and who love art, thanks to the discoveries of modern science which will keep the mass supplied with the stuff it wants, and totally out of touch with the real achievements of man, thought or art.

BURLINGA
PUBLIC
LIB.

Abasmirza Sharifov as Hamlet in a recent Russian production of Shakespeare's tragedy at the Azerbaidjan State Art Theatre in Baku.

THE BALLET LESSON

Agnes De Mille, newest member of The Dance Repertory Theatre, appears in a reminiscence of Degas. (*Photograph by Sunami*)

LA MONTANSIER

By Rosamond Gilder

THE tiny theatre in the town of Versailles was crowded beyond capacity one late summer afternoon in the year 1776. Never before had so many dukes and marquises, so many counts and princes, so many beruffled gentlemen of the court and so many flounced and powdered ladies of high degree found their way down the narrow corridor of the little auditorium on the rue Satory. The stage box on the left of the miniature proscenium had been draped in damask of blue and gold, hastily snatched from the property room for the occasion; wax candles, at vast expense, replaced the tallow dips in the pendant chandeliers and behind the scenes hearts beat high in anticipation. Only a few hours before word had come from the Chateau that certain ladies of the Queen's immediate circle wished to see the play. The information was unofficial, merely a hint, but a hint sufficient for those who knew a young Queen's passion for the theatre, her love of incognito and her special taste for rustic scenes. The play announced for this evening's performance was Favart's *Les Moissonneurs*—the very thing to lure abroad a princess enamored of pastoral simplicities. When a little before five o'clock the royal box was invaded by a bevy of young women, all dressed in simplest white muslin gowns, organdy fichus pinned demurely across their breasts, sparkling eyes and laughing faces only half hidden by wide straw hats, no one even pretended not to recognize among them the youthful Marie Antoinette escaping for a moment from the chill indifference of her husband's company and the watchful eye of the dragons of court etiquette.

The second act opened with a scene laid in the grange of a country estate. The generous Seigneur of the play was seated at table, surrounded by his loyal servitors. Before him stood a steaming tureen—a huge bowl of cabbage soup which filled the theatre with its plebeian but appetizing odour. From the stage box came a delighted exclamation. "Ah! How good it smells! How delicious! I would gladly have a portion myself." A Queen, even

incognito, could not be allowed to hunger! No sooner had the curtain been drawn on the stage than there came a knock at the door of the Royal Box. "The directress presents her respectful greetings to Her Majesty and would Her Majesty do her the very great honor of tasting the player's humble *soupe-aux-choux*."

Marie Antoinette turned and smiled. Courtesying low before her was a plump, black-eyed woman dressed giddily, but in the height of fashion. Under an enormous pile of wig, decked with flowers and feathers, an eager, intelligent face looked up at the Queen. The woman's complexion was dazzling, an even white, which threw into relief the thick arch of her inky eyebrows, the rich curves of a sensuous mouth and the mocking angle of a slightly tip-tilted nose. Her voice was clear and assured, touched with the warm accent of the south, a voice to be remembered. No longer young, but still vivacious and provocative, Marguerite Brunet, known to history and the police as La Demoiselle de Montansier, sank into the folds of her silken skirt. In her hands—they were particularly capable and sensitive hands, her one great beauty—she held outstretched a bowl of cabbage soup.

So Mlle. Montansier, the first business manager and directress of the European theatre makes her appearance on the scene. Her gesture, at once theatrical and canny, is typical of her career. The first woman to undertake stage management on a large scale, she owed her success to her quick grasp of opportunity, the boldness of her imagination and the unscrupulous energy with which she pursued her ends.

Before La Montansier's advent, a series of more or less able actresses had served the French theatre with their various talents. Madeleine and Armande Béjart had led the way and a band of talented actresses followed. For thirty years Mlle. Duclos had stormed through post-Racinian tragedy in all the glory of an enthusiastically bombastic style. Adrienne Lecouvreur had come and gone, leaving the memory of a touching beauty, simplicity and grace. Voltaire's two great interpreters, Mlle. Dumesnil and Mlle. Clairon had contributed enormously to the prestige of the French stage and the latter had inaugurated important reforms in costuming and technique. These and other distinguished actresses had taken part in the deliberations and even in the direction of the Comédie Française and occasionally organized companies of their own in the provinces, but acting had been their

THÉÂTRE DE LA MONTANSIER

The foyer of Montansier's famous theatre at the Palais Royal. The picture is from an engraving by Bonnet (after Binet) which is in the collection of the library of the Comédie Française. (From *Le Théâtre a Paris au XVIII Siècle* by Max Aghion)

In interesting contrast with modern theatre construction is this exterior view of an 18th century Paris playhouse, Le Théâtre du Monsieur, in the rue Feydeau. (From *Le Théâtre a Paris au XVIII Siècle,* by Max Aghion) Below is an amusing 18th century print of the garden of the Palais Royal.

first and foremost interest. It remained for La Montansier to establish management as a profession for women in France—and to prove that acting was not the only branch of theatrical art in which a woman could achieve success.

Marguerite Brunet was born at Bayonne and baptized there on the 19th of December 1730. Various stories are current about her early life, but the first authentic information we have concerning her is that she was living in Paris in 1748 at No. 12 rue St. Roche. Nominally she was under the tutelage of her aunt, a certain Madame Montansier, dealer in old clothes, but actually, as the Paris police records show, she pursued with success a profession to which her poverty, combined with her youth, her love of adventure and her lively disposition had inevitably conducted her.

After ten years of life as a *fille gallante,* Marguerite decided to settle down to a more stable occupation. Her latest lover, a young nobleman named Saint-Contest, was prevailed upon to set her up in the business she desired. She had always loved the theatre and now the idea took possession of her that though she could not act—one or two abortive attempts had proved the point—she could and would manage and direct. At her instigation Monsieur de Saint-Contest secured a theatre for her at Nantes, where her career began modestly enough. Here she made her first attempts at management and may have acted a little with her own company, but the provinces could not satisfy her for long. In 1768 Saint-Contest obtained permission for her to go to Versailles, the heart and centre of monarchic France, and there she rented the little theatre in the rue Satory where she was destined some eight years later, to meet and welcome her Queen.

Once established in Versailles, Mlle. Montansier went vigorously to work to consolidate and improve her position. She cultivated her worldly friends, her ex-lovers, her ducs, marquises and counts. She curried favor with the duc de Duras and the other Gentlemen of the Bedchamber whose prerogative it was to direct all theatrical enterprises. She paid court to the king's mistress—the all powerful Du Barry—and obtained her favor and assistance.

Even at this early date, hampered by an inadequate equipment and a total lack of funds, La Montansier proved her capabilities as a directress by producing new plays and introducing new players, actors, actresses and singers destined to long and honorable careers on the stage. Fleury was the most distinguished of her early

theatrical finds and he became in time a leading light in the Comédie. An excellent actor, very handsome and a great favorite with the ladies, he was already at the age of eighteen something of a spark. The *Mémoires* which bear his name contain some lively anecdotes of these early days at Versailles as well as a vivid description of his first directress in action.

"La Montansier was a charming woman!" he tells us. "Meridional in every sense of the term, in accent, gesture and feeling; she was not young when I knew her, but endowed with something better than youth; provocative rather than pretty; possessing a natural rather than a cultivated wit—she permitted herself every liberty of speech and was in consequence often very amusing. In her relations with her artists this famous directress was always kind; she was also just as fair as her quick temper would permit, but she had no sense of order. I cannot imagine when she took time to rest. She gave her days to her work and her amusements—her nights she spent gambling, a taste which amounted with her to a passion"—a vice, it might be added, which she shared with most of her contemporaries from Marie Antoinette to Fleury himself!

But while she gambled and amused herself in other ways, she worked steadily toward a scheme dear to her heart, the building of a theatre which would adequately house her increasingly distinguished audience and provide a stage and appurtenances suitable for the plays and operas she longed to produce. After years of effort and four separate disappointments she finally obtained her object and opened her new theatre on the rue des Réservoirs with Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in the royal box and all the court in attendance. This did not take place till 1777, a year or more after the episode of the cabbage soup, and two years after she had been granted the exclusive privilege of giving plays in Versailles, Marly, Fontainbleau, or wherever the court might be established.

Her privilege as directress of theatrical enterprises *à la suite de la cour* was far from being a sinecure. The twelve years during which she held it were crowded with enterprising and novel undertakings. Not content with running the theatre at Versailles, at Fontainbleau and Marly she obtained a privilege for the north, and built and ran theatres in Le Havre, Caen and Rouen. During the summers she took her company on tours, playing in Normandy

and in the Loire, at Orleans, Tours, Angers and Bordeaux. Finally she evolved a magnificent scheme, described in a memorial addressed to the baron de Breteuil drawing attention to the fact that the Paris Opera was costing the king a subvention of 150,000 livres a year. She proposed to pay this amount herself in exchange for the privilege of controlling all the theatres in France —she aimed at nothing less than a national theatrical monopoly, and she worked out a plan which would co-ordinate all the different provincial theatres without interfering with their liberty and independence. Her petition was not granted, more serious matters were then occupying the powers about the throne, but her plan still exists to bear witness to her enterprising imagination as well as to her soaring ambition.

Meanwhile, the theatre at Versailles continued its successful career. The Queen was an exigent mistress and demanded variety as well as quality and quantity from her players. "There were often two performances in the same day," Mme. Campan records. "Grand opera, French or Italian comedy at the usual hour, and then, at eleven o'clock at night, we would go back to the theatre to see parodies and skits in which the leading actors of the Opera took the most absurd parts and wore the most extraordinary and bizarre costumes."

From the beginning of her career at Versailles Mlle. Montansier essayed every form of theatrical enterprise. She put on Ducis' softly sentimental version of *Hamlet*, very popular at the time, and produced a whole repertory of tragedies old and new. When de Belloy's *Pierre le Cruel* failed on its first production in Paris, she transferred it to her theatre and brought it out with striking success. Little by little the theatre on the rue des Réservoirs began to earn a reputation not only for the excellence of its performances but for the originality of its material as well.

In addition to her own productions, the astute directress imported special attractions from Paris—opera singers, dancers, actors and musicians. She brought over an entire troupe of Italian singers from the Haymarket in London to give grand opera at Versailles—the best opera company that France had yet heard. One of her greatest triumphs was the production of Dubuisson's *Le Roi Théodore à Venise* with music by Paisiello, a gay and tuneful operetta, with Mlle. Lillié, that "sweet nightingale", in the leading role. The Queen was enchanted, the court in raptures, all Paris rushed

out to Versailles to see it. "The execution of the finale of the second act was perfection," the critic in the *Mercure de France* for March 3, 1787 tells us, "not only on account of the precision and excellence of the ensemble, but also and more especially because of the way the whole scene has been conceived, the continuous movement of the actors, carried out without confusion and without distracting attention from the scene." Mlle. Montansier was one of the first directors to understand and make use of crowd effects.

If her professional occupations were arduous and distracting, her private life was no less hectic. Besides her necessary attendance on the Queen, her endless pursuit of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber for political influence and advancement, her duties as manager, play-reader, directress and mistress-in-chief of a complicated organization, she continued to hold her receptions in her apartments on the second floor of her theatre in the rue des Réservoirs and to carry on the strange and harrowing romance that ran like an undercurrent through her busy and distracted life.

When Mlle. Montansier went to Nantes to begin her career in the theatre, she met and fell in love with a handsome young actor named Honoré Bourdon, known on the stage as Noeuville or Neuville. She evidently really loved this man, who was a second rate actor and something of a brute and a bully. He caused her endless anguish and anxiety by the violence of his temper which often led him into disgraceful rows. On one occasion he was arrested for beating up a creditor who came to him for money, on another he nearly killed La Montansier herself. The affair caused a terrible uproar, but apparently the lady forgave both infidelity and assault, for when he got into even more serious difficulty by nearly killing a man with whom he quarrelled, she rushed to his assistance, paid his fine and finally obtained his pardon.

In the meanwhile public affairs at Versailles were becoming increasingly agitated. Bankruptcy menaced the country, famine, fear and discontent were abroad. In 1789 the king was forced to call the nation to his assistance, and in a whirl of excitement, hope, oratory and polemics the Estates-General gathered at Versailles for the first time since 1614. The astute directress of royal amusements watched the trend of the times and made provisions for the future.

As early as 1785 La Montansier had had in mind a descent on the capital. She was at the gates of Paris and she longed to direct

a theatre in that seething and theatre loving capital. It was impossible, of course, for her to do so as the Théâtre Français had a monopoly of drama and the Académie de Musique of opera and ballet. Three other playhouses had managed to obtain limited concessions and the theatres of the fairs played in spite of lawsuits and prohibitions, but La Montansier knew the difficulties of braving rights of the Comédie and she therefore began negotiation for the little Théâtre des Beaujolais for the ostensible purpose of founding a school for child actors and actresses. In 1788 she succeeded in buying the eleven arcades of the Palais Royal which contained the theatre as well as the apartment in which she was destined to spend the rest of her long life. The sum she payed for this property, 570,000 livres, was enormous, but La Montansier was a wise business woman and knew what she was doing. She had found a place for herself in the very heart of Paris, which was the heart of France itself. She could not possibly have foreseen the events of the next five years—no one did—but she had sensed the importance and growing power of the city and she established herself in the strategic centre of events.

Her theatre was very small, having been built for marionettes, so that at first she was unable to mount her plays and operas in the manner she desired. In 1791, however, she was able to achieve an almost miraculous transformation of her scene. The theatre, greatly enlarged and embellished, was made to seat thirteen hundred people and given a stage, which though small was built for adults. Here, with the new liberty granted to all theatres by a decree of the National Assembly in January 1791, La Montansier and Neuville embarked on a series of varied productions. Their company was reinforced by actors from the Théâtre Français, their singers were so excellent that the Academy of Music became increasingly jealous and inimical. Grammont and the Sainval sisters played for them. Mlle. Mars, destined to become one of the most famous of French actresses, made her début under their direction. The Théâtre Montansier was a great success but its directress was in constant danger. The storms that swept Paris and all France with war, revolution and sudden death, swept in and out of the theatres as well and no one was safe or at peace for more than an hour at a time.

With her former royal patroness a virtual prisoner at the Tuileries and, after August 10th, 1792, an actual prisoner in the Temple, La Montansier was the target of endless accusations, personal

libels and political intrigues. She was accused of hiding arms in the basement of her theatre, of forwarding royalist plots, of every imaginable form of *incivism* past, present and to come. One method of protecting herself, a method entirely in keeping with her tastes and habits, was to hold open house for all the leaders of the day. No sooner had she established herself in her quarters over the Café de Chartres than she began to receive in her salon and in the foyer of her theatre, all her friends and acquaintances of every shade of political opinion or no opinion at all.

Without joining any party La Montansier received them all. But love intrigues are sometimes more dangerous than politics, as she was to find to her cost. One day she received a curt note from a certain pale and passionate gentleman whose suit for the favors of one of her young actresses she had inadvertently obstructed. "Citizeness," the ominous missive ran, "It is said that the wit of France has taken refuge in your theatre, see to it that it is not used to mock me. And further, if I respect your pleasures—respect mine—I have few enough in the midst of my grave responsibilities", signed "Robespierre."

The Incorruptible had spoken! La Montansier realized that it was time for her to make some spectacular demonstration of her patriotism. Closing her theatre and rallying her staff around her —actors, dancers, singers, musicians and mechanics to the number of eighty strong, La Montansier presented herself at the bar of the Legislative Assembly and asked that her company of volunteers be sent to the front. The gesture was accepted with shouts of enthusiasm and a rising vote of thanks and commendation to the directress. The actor-warriors were dispatched to barracks and then actually sent forward under Neuville's command. This irascible bully had been a very genuine Republican from the beginning. He started to the wars with enthusiasm, but got no further than Rheims, where he was hurt by a fall from his horse. La Montansier rushed to his rescue and brought him back safely to Paris and to his more peaceful and appropriate avocations as actor and joint director of the little theatre in the Palais Royal.

The breathless drama of the Revolution and the Terror was in full tide. France, in the anguish of its fear both of invasion and of betrayal, struck madly right and left, killing its own and attacking the enemy. The monarchy abolished, the September massacres flamed across the sky. The King and Queen were imprisoned and

guillotined. Led by Dumouriez, the ragged army of *sans culottes* faced the enemy and the Austrians were driven out of France. Belgium was liberated or captured and the Revolution triumphant. La Montansier watched all this with passionate interest and excitement. When Dumouriez started toward Brussels she conceived the project of being made directress in the suite of the conquering army as she had been directress in the suite of the court. She obtained permission, and even money, from the Convention and in November 1792 we find the intrepid directress established in Brussels in the Théâtre de La Monnaie, teaching the recalcitrant Belgians the beauties of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity by means of a series of violently republican and anti-clerical plays. The defeat of the French forces and the desertion of Dumouriez brought her campaign to an abrupt end. She was forced to fly from Brussels, leaving her costumes, scenery and personal possessions in the hands of the enemy.

BUR... PU... LIB.

La Montansier was sixty-three years old when she came back to Paris and took up again the direction of her theatrical enterprises there. Time and troubles, the dangers of the day and the ever present menace of the guillotine, now swinging into its busiest year, might have dampened the ardour of the bravest, but Marguerite Brunet was of another stamp. In her hardy old age she launched the largest enterprise she had yet undertaken and with a flourish of trumpets and much waving of flags she opened her own theatre in Paris, the Théâtre National, on August 15, 1793.

The project had, of course, been brewing for several years. Hampered by the smallness of her Palais Royal stage she had from the beginning nursed the hope of creating a really beautiful and adequate theatre which would be her own. In 1791, she bought a plot of land opposite the Bibliothèque Nationale on the rue de Richelieu, sometimes called the rue de la Loi on the very spot known today as the Place Louvois. She commissioned the architect Louis to build for her the finest theatre he could devise and this he did in an astonishingly short time. The theatre stood on an isolated plot, a handsome building with grilled arcades and ample exits and entrances on all four sides. The auditorium was large and elaborately decorated, illuminated by a kind of indirect lighting quite new in theatre architecture. Another innovation was the elimination of stage boxes. "The directors feel," so the prospectus explains, "that in order to increase the pleasures of the

spectacle and the truth of theatrical representation, there should be a line of demarcation between the spectator and the action represented, and that in order to have the public enjoy the performance to the full the actor should, as it were, be left alone with the character he is interpreting. This consideration, so important to the progress as well as the magic of art, has silenced all financial considerations and for the first time a theatre has been built without boxes on the stage." Behind the scenes the building was equally well organized. The stage was seventy-five feet deep and a hundred feet high. The scenery could be brought up from below or lowered from above as required. The building contained a studio for scene painting, as well as the usual offices and green rooms, a large foyer and an assembly room for balls and receptions. It cost in all some three million livres and was adjudged one of the finest theatres of its day.

The Citoyenne Montansier's summer repertory was chosen with extreme care. Voltaire was safe and certain of Molière's plays had been declared harmless. Dubuisson's operettas, the comedies of Regnard and Destouches were passed by the official censors. The more dangerous and violent approval of the *tap-durs* in the audience was enlisted by new productions, all of a violently propagandist nature. Her actors were equally patriotic. Her partner Neuville had been injured in the cause of freedom. Molé, whom she had just engaged, was the one important member of the Théâtre Français not arrested in September when that famous band was thrown into prison accompanied by the terrible threat: "The head of the Comédie Française will be guillotined and the rest deported."

La Montansier's plays, her company, her sentiments and her actions seemed above suspicion, yet on November 13, 1793, Chaumette denounced her before the Revolutionary Tribunal on the astounding charge that she had built her theatre in order to set fire to the Bibliothèque Nationale. The motive behind her arrest was simple enough. Her theatre was coveted by those interested in the Opera, chief among them her old enemy Robespierre. After her imprisonment her troupe continued to act for a few months, but in April 1794 they were arbitrarily ejected from their theatre, and the Opera took possession of it, under the name of Théâtre des Arts, the following August—a year after its inauguration.

In the meanwhile, La Montansier was in prison and Neuville as

well. The latter was arrested on the incriminating charge that a door led from his apartment into that of the suspect, Marguerite Brunet. These were the days of the great Terror when there were few releases except by way of the scaffold. La Montansier was in hourly danger of death but she managed to keep alive until the 9th Thermidor, that joyful 27th of July 1794, which saw the downfall of Robespierre and his satellites and the end of the acute phase of the Terror. On September 16, she was released from prison, and arm in arm with Neuville returned to her home at Number 82 Maison Égalité under the arcades of the ci-devant Palais Royal.

Here she took account of stock once more, and resumed control of her little theatre. As in the early days of the Revolution her salon and foyer became a center of amusement and of politico-social activities. As the new-rich came into their money, as the *émigrés* floated back, and the city, weary of noble sentiments and great words, settled into its post-revolutionary disillusionment, the galleries of the Palais Royal came to life once again. In and out of the theatre, under the arcades and in the Gardens strolled a motley crowd of pleasure seekers, *beaux* and *muscadin* with their tight trousers, their flaring lapels and flapping coat tails, *incroyables* and *merveilleuses* in long straight dresses, high-waisted and transparent, on their heads deep poke bonnets denoting a modesty which had long ceased to be in fashion. In the lounge of La Montansier's theatre two counters catered to her patrons' tastes, one where lemonade and sweets could be bought, the other devoted to the flood of scurrilous and indecent literature for which the arcades of the Palais Royal were ever famous. Here in the evening came the rulers of the people, soldiers on leave, merchants making their fortune from their countries' needs, foreigners bent on seeing the sights and snatching an evening's pleasure. Lovely ladies were there for the asking, of all kinds and at all prices, and over it all La Montansier presided benignly, seeing little difference in the methods by which mankind amuses itself whether the Government in power is King or Incorruptible, Director, Consul or Dictator. She had entertained them all in her hospitable salon and now the most spectacular of all these rulers of men came for a moment under her roof and sat at her table.

Only two years after the fall of Robespierre, La Montansier met, and, some would have us believe, nearly married the man who was destined to "confiscate the revolution" and restore autocratic rule

to France. The story is preposterous but it is not at all unlikely that the young man fresh from Italy and Toulon found his way into La Montansier's much frequented drawing room in Barras' wake, and that he sat on the dilapidated old blue damask sofa beside Mlle. Montansier, as so many famous men from the Comte d'Artois to Danton and Robespierre had done before him and listened with interest to her racy conversation.

Even in her old age La Montansier was indefatigable. At sixty-nine she married Neuville who died four years later during the winter that she was thrown into prison for the unsettled debts of the Thèâtre National which was no longer hers. In 1810 when she was eighty years old, having through all these years retained interests in various theatrical enterprises, she once more took over the active direction of her little Palais Royal theatre now called the Jeux-Forains. There she gave fairy scenes, vaudeville, ballets and pantomimes with the marionettes of the old Théâtre des Beaujolais, which she had kept stored away in the attic ever since she had evicted them in 1789.

After a last spurt of energy in the winter of 1812, she closed her theatre for good and nothing more is heard in the theatrical world of the little old woman whom Paul de Kock saw trotting across the Palais Royal gardens—"So old, so decrepit, so lined and shrunken, and in addition so grotesquely clothed, that I thought her the fairy Carabosse herself." She died on July 13, 1820 at the ripe age of ninety. The last glimpse we have of her before her death, is at a reception given by the actor Brunet. "Her spicy reminiscences, her gay and witty conversation held everyone enthralled," a fellow guest tells us. "Old as she was she dominated the salon and made herself the focus of interest and attention." And so we leave her—this first of women-managers surrounded by her friends and admirers and still holding centre stage in spite of time and tide.

Six Theatre Projects

Norman Bel Geddes
ARCHITECT

Designed for, and under consideration by
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Photographs by Maurice Goldberg

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SIX THEATRE PROJECTS

The Intimate Theatre

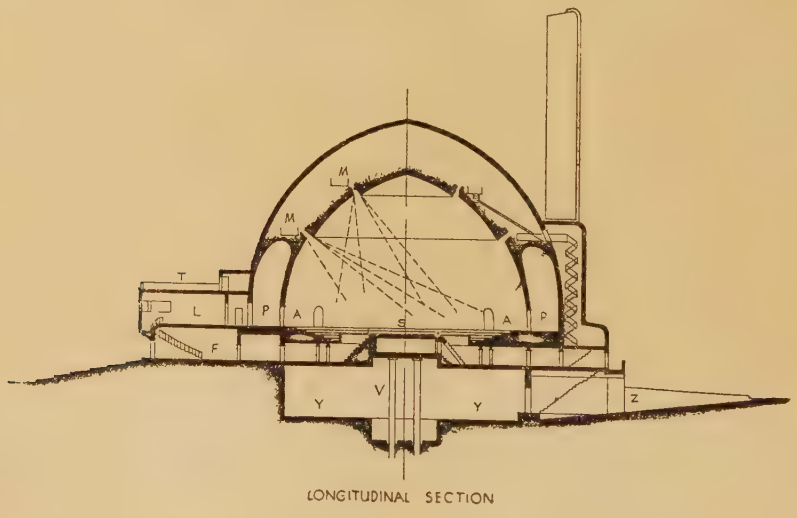
"Theatre Number Fourteen"

THEATRE Number 14 is a small intimate theatre with the audience seated in a circle around all sides of the stage.

STAGE: The stage, designed on the same principle as a European circus or a boxing ring, is circular and in the centre of the building. Separating the stage from the auditorium are steps which form an apron and an approach to the stage for actors. Scenery would be restricted to what is commonly termed properties, that is, objects such as furniture.

Under the auditorium on the ground floor are the dressing rooms, each with a shower and outside window. These rooms radiate from a passage around the stairs leading to the assembly room and the stage.

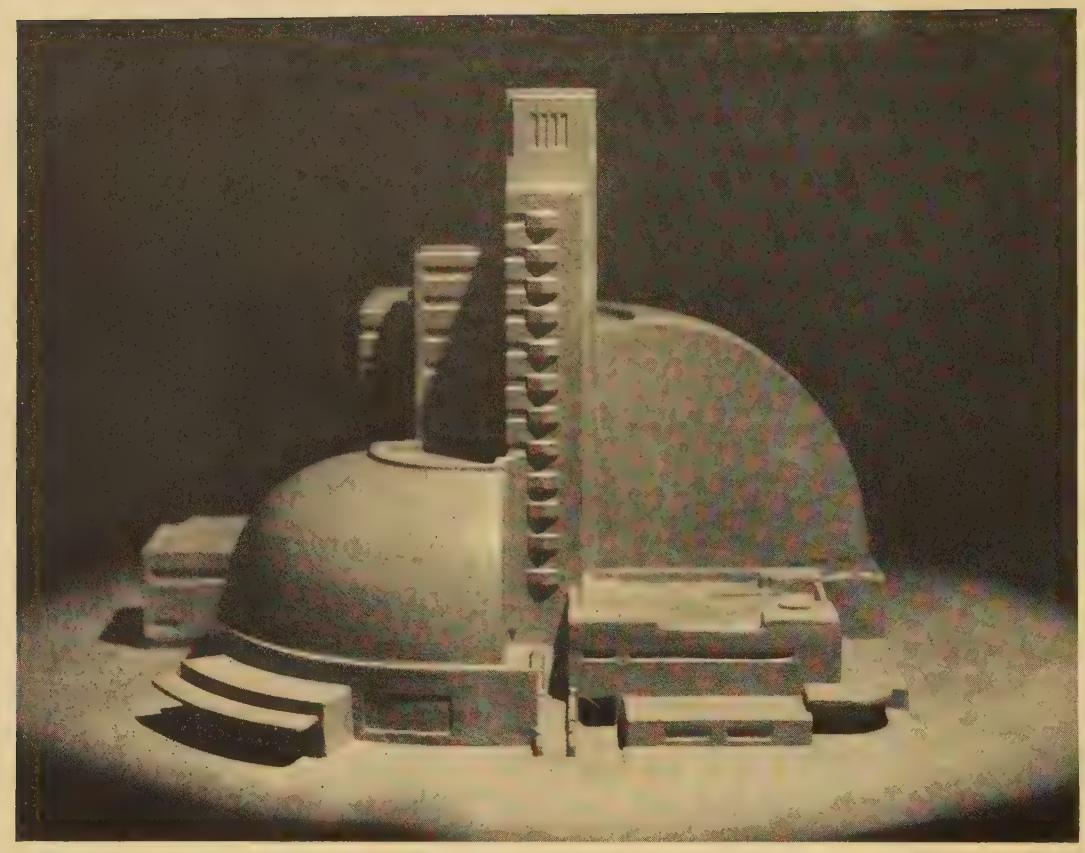
BASEMENT: The basement contains storage space for scenery and properties. All scene changes are made in the basement. The scenery is set on two movable stages which are raised and lowered by hydraulic power. In their elevated position at the auditorium level they form the acting stage floor. One stage is being set while the other is being "played"; the substitution, which takes a few seconds, is made behind a curtain of light or a moment's blackout. The stage when lowered descends into a shallow pit which brings its floor level with the basement floor. The stage is carried from its original position to one side—a distance equal to its diameter—on tracks. The second stage, already set for the next scene, is automatically rolled into position and raised to the auditorium level.



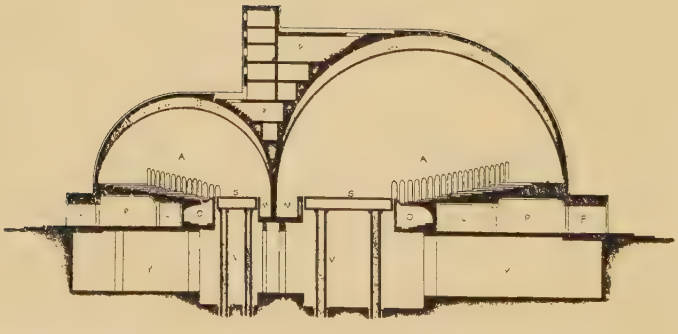
The Intimate Theatre

AUDITORIUM: The auditorium has a capacity of eight hundred people. It is circular, surrounding the stage, has no balcony, and is only six rows deep. It is cut by eight transverse aisles, but each tier of seats becomes an aisle by reason of the wide interval—four and one-half feet—between

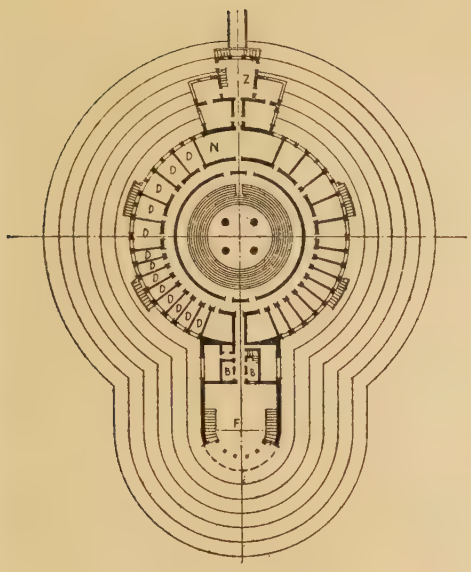
THE INTIMATE THEATRE

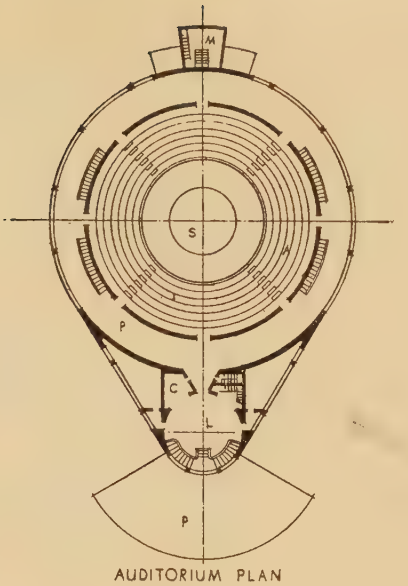


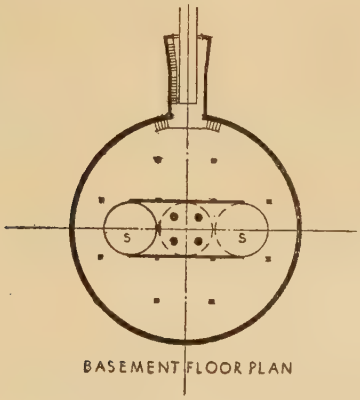
THE REPERTORY THEATRE



CROSS SECTION







Plans for the Intimate Theatre

Letter Key to All Plans

A. *Auditorium*
B. *Box Office*
C. *Check Room*
D. *Dressing Room*
E. *Elevators*
F. *Foyer*
G. *Sound Machinery*
H. *Shower Room*
J. *Toilet*
K. *Dining Room*
L. *Lounge*
M. *Electrician*
N. *Assembly Room*
O. *Orchestra*
P. *Promenade*
Q. *Automobile Tunnel*
R. *Rehearsal Room*
S. *Stage*
T. *Terrace*
U. *Dining Space*
V. *Hydraulic Plungers*
W. *Dance Floor*
X. *Escalators*
Y. *Area for Shifting Scenery*
Z. *Stage Door Entrance*

one chair back and the next. By this arrangement each seat has plenty of leg room and also commands an excellent view of the entire stage. Because each seat is equally "the best in the house" the revenue from these 800 seats (all at the top price) is equal to that from twice the number at the usual sliding scale.

Surrounding the auditorium is a broad promenade with windows. Projecting from the promenade is an upstairs lounge, to either side of which are retiring rooms. An outdoor terrace is cantilevered above.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: These are on the ground floor and consist at the front of entrance foyer, box offices, manager's office, producer's offices. At the rear of the building are the green room, director's office, stage manager's office, stage door entrance, waiting room, and freight elevator entrance.

GENERAL NOTES ON BUILDING: Surrounding the dome that spans both stage and auditorium are two concentric light galleries with locations for lamps at many angles. All lamp positions are invisible to the audience as seated during the performance. Inside the railing in front of the first row of seats is a circular row of lamps for throwing light upward (as footlights do on a proscenium stage). All lights are controlled from a single switchboard. The overall diameter of the auditorium, including the promenade, is 132 feet, and of the circular stage 30 feet. The longitudinal axis of the theatre is 300 feet. From the stage floor to the peak of the dome above is 65 feet. The basement is 25 feet below the ground level.

The Repertory Theatre

A Development of "Theatre Number Six"

A SELF contained group for a repertory organization, consisting of a central tower from which radiate one large and one small theatre, a cabaret and roof garden, and a theatre for children.

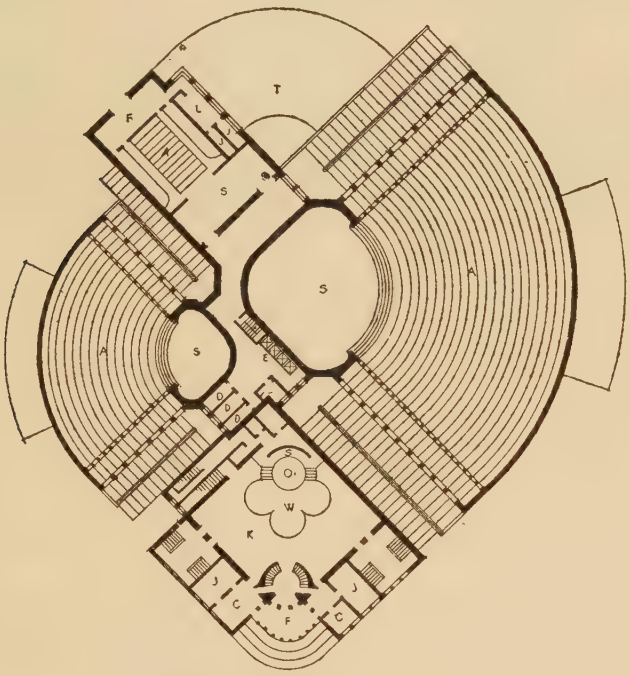
THE LARGE AND SMALL THEATRES: The large and small theatres have the same plan with the exception that the large theatre seats 1,700 and the small, 600 people. The main axis of the stage and auditorium is along the diagonal of the square represented by the ground plan; thus getting a deeper stage and increasing the seating area.

Wide aisles between the rows of seats eliminate the necessity of transverse aisles. By this arrangement every seat has direct access to an exit, has plenty of leg room and commands an excellent view of the entire stage, none being too distant to be desirable, nor too high up or low down. The absence of balconies and the increase in the number of aisles with the direction of their discharge gently downward eliminate the greatest source of danger from panic in case of fire.

There are no footlights, no visible orchestra pit, no proscenium arch. A flight of steps across the entire front of the stage and two side jambs, that lose themselves in the curve of the ceiling, alone divide the stage from the

auditorium. The only curtain is a heavy one of steel on the ceiling of the basement, which cuts it off from the auditorium, and which would only be used in an emergency.

There are two movable stage platforms which are raised and lowered to the basement by hydraulic power; in their final positions at the proper level, they constitute the stage floor. The two stage platforms make it possible for one scene to be set in the basement while another is being "played", the substitution being effected during twenty seconds of darkness or behind a curtain of light.



A Plan for the Repertory Theatre

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE: The Children's Theatre is a small proscenium type theatre seating 200 children on the main floor and 60 adults on a balcony. The length is 84 feet and the width is 56 feet.

The stage has a second stage above it for marionette shows. The theatre is rectangular in shape with two side aisles. Above the auditorium is a rehearsal room. On the roof are terraces for outdoor dance and gymnasium rehearsals.

THE CABARET: The cabaret has a dining capacity of 250 people. The main axis of the entrance, dance floor, and orchestra is on the diagonal of the square represented by the ground plan of the building. The main dining room is two stories high with a balcony around the second floor. The

kitchen and pantries are in the basement with service elevators to the balcony level.

Directly across from the entrance is a circular orchestra pit sunk below the level of the dance floor. From this the dance floor radiates. Behind the orchestra pit is an elevated stage with steps on either side leading down to the dance floor. A movable screen regulates the depth of the stage.

On either side of the entrance lobby are retiring rooms and pantries.

THE ROOF GARDEN: The roof garden is rectangular in plan, with four terraces and a circular orchestra space. Stairs and an elevator rise from the lobby to the balcony and roof gardens.

GENERAL NOTES ON BUILDING: The orchestra pits in the large and small theatres occupy the space between the foyer and the stage on the ground level. This pit is entirely invisible to the audience, the sound reaching the auditorium through perforations in the risers of the continuous flight of steps which form the apron to the stage. This room is large enough to accommodate an orchestra of sixty musicians; the conductor commands a view of the entire stage through a periscope.

A single dome spans the stage and the auditorium, forming a vast cyclorama including both walls and ceiling and clearing the stage space of the usual wilderness of ropes, drops and borders.

The major part of the space underneath the auditorium is occupied by a broad quadrant-shaped foyer, forming an ample promenade, from either side of which broad stairways lead to the auditorium.

The basement under the ground floor is storage and shifting space for scenery.

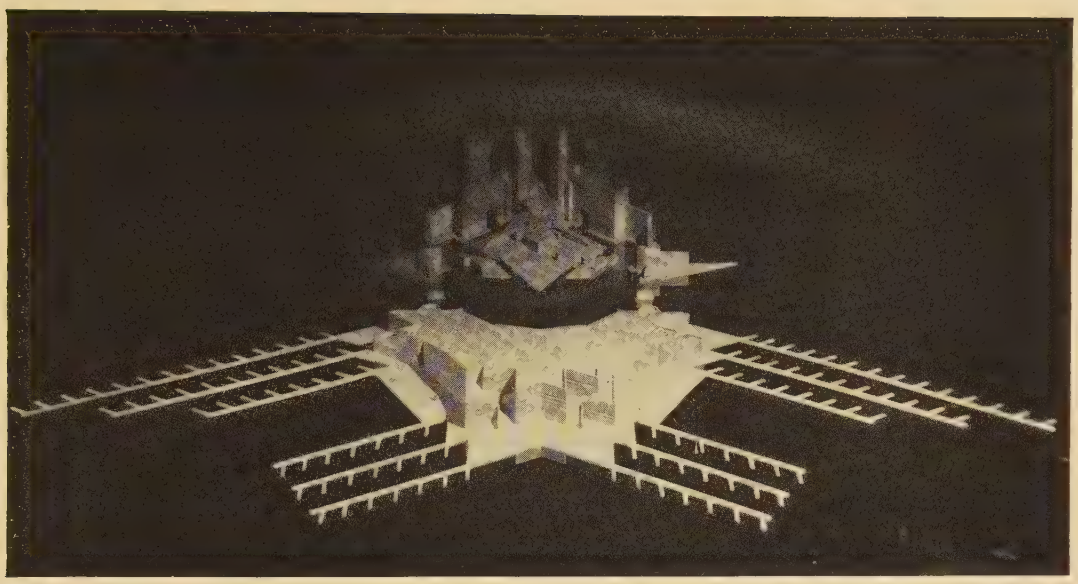
On the roof is space for open air rehearsals, directly adjacent to the interior rehearsal rooms.

Light galleries surround the dome and are controlled from one switchboard. This control is located above and behind the heads of the spectators and concealed from them, the projectors being on disappearing carriages, hidden by a parapet save when in actual use.

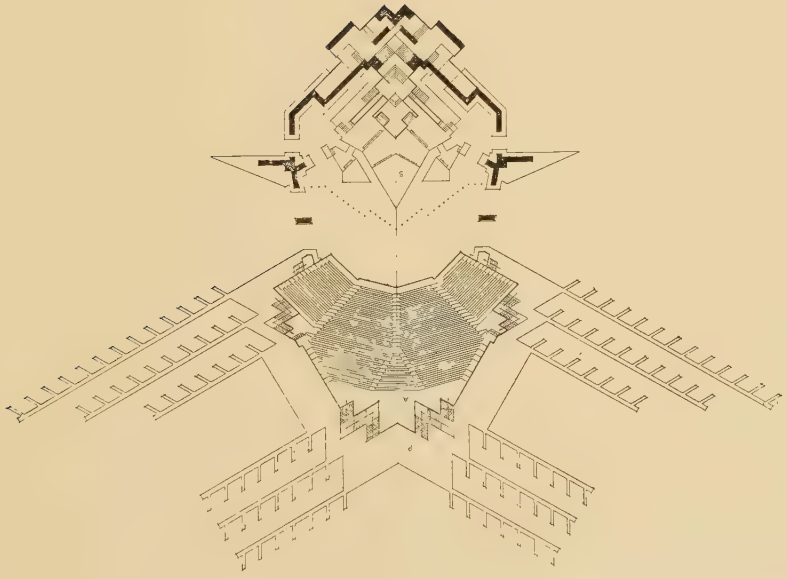
The depth of the stage of the large theatre is 52 feet. The depth of the auditorium is 100 feet, and the spread of the auditorium including the side aisles is 236 feet. The height of the dome above the auditorium floor level is 96 feet.

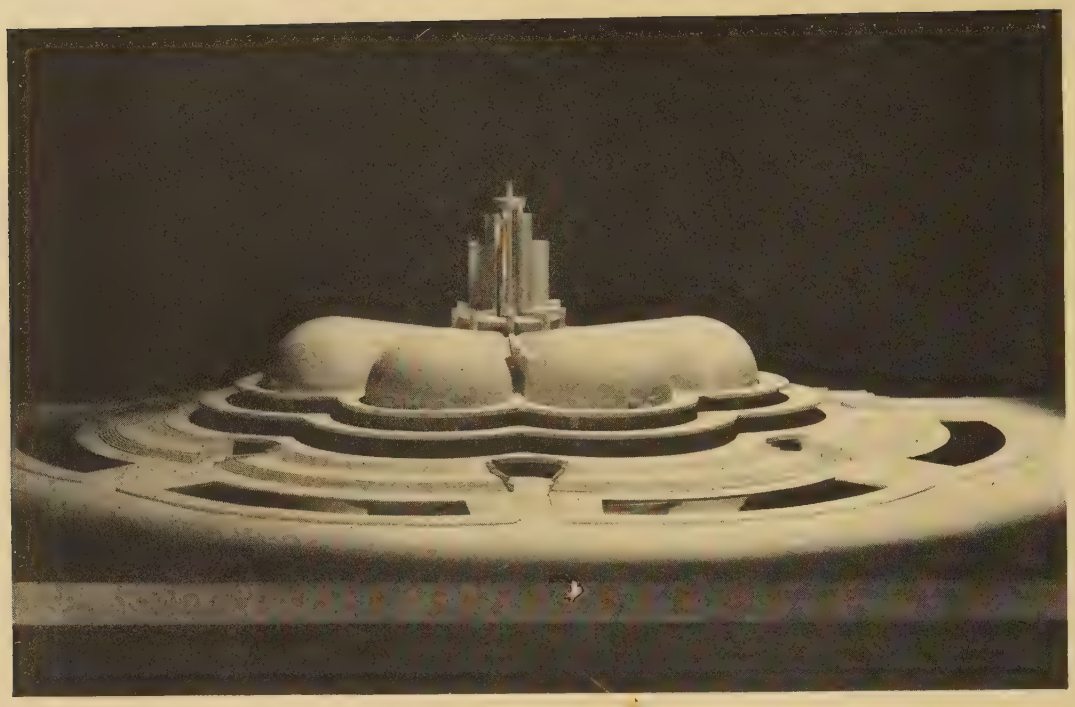
The depth of the stage of the small theatre is 24 feet. The depth of the auditorium is 64 feet, and the spread of the auditorium including the side aisles is 144 feet. The height of the dome above the auditorium floor level is 64 feet.

THE CENTRAL TOWER: The Central Tower is composed of over one hundred large dressing rooms each having outside windows and showers, rehearsal rooms, workshops, and offices. The tower is nineteen stories high, the two top stories being devoted to water tanks. Its position is equally adjacent and convenient to all the theatres. The average space of each tower floor is 2,848 square feet.

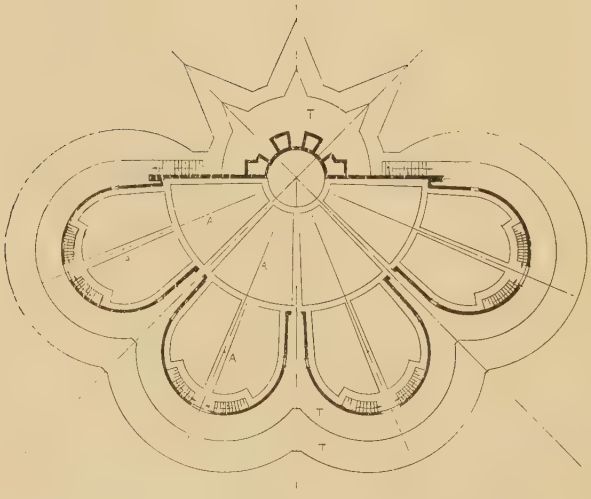


THE WATER PAGEANT THEATRE

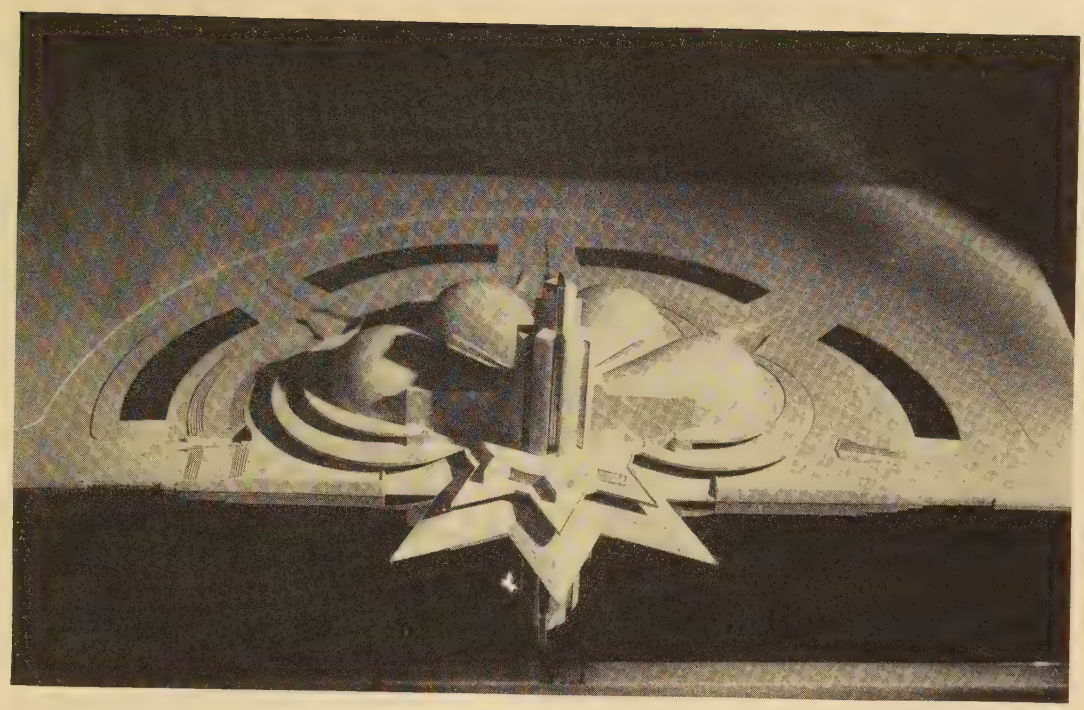




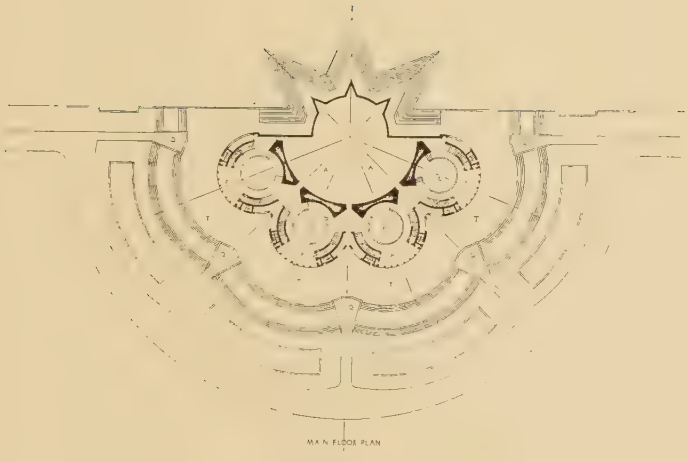
THE TEMPLE OF MUSIC

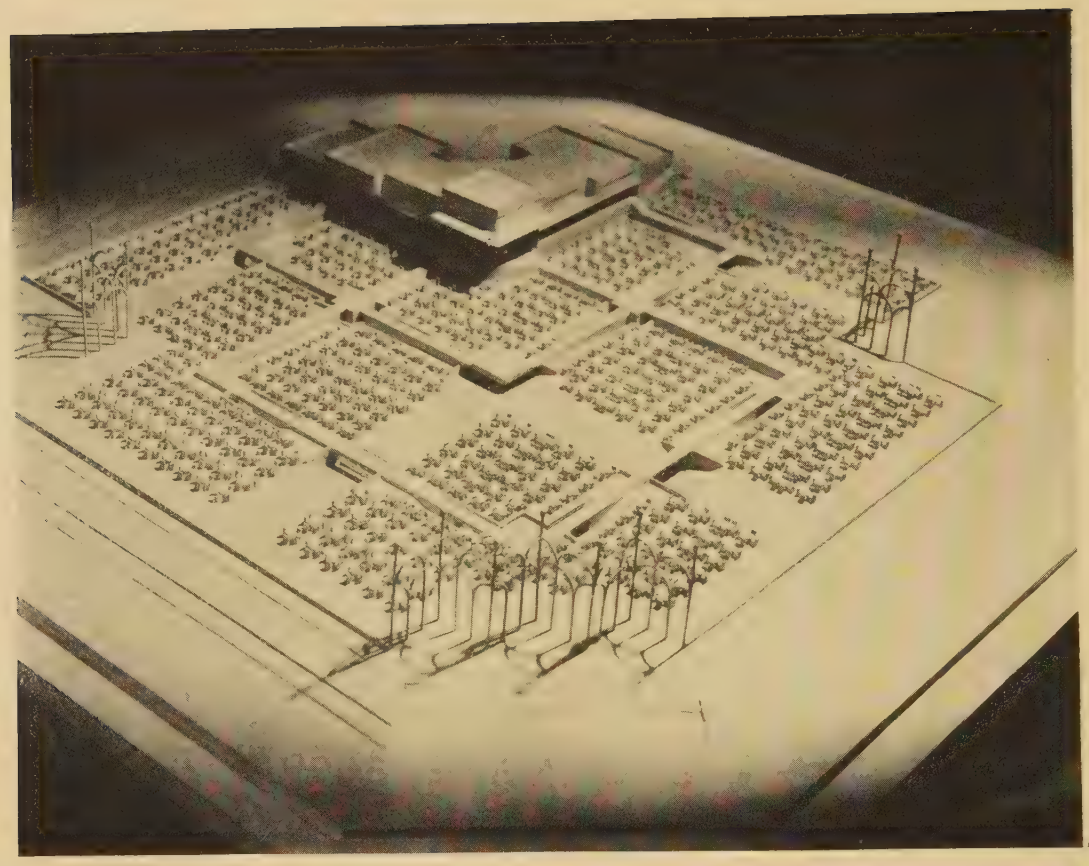


AUDITORIUM PLAN



THE TEMPLE OF MUSIC





THE CABARET THEATRE.

SIX THEATRE PROJECTS

Water Pageant Theatre

AN open air theatre for water pageants built on a group of anchored barges in a lake, with the stage separated from the auditorium and entirely surrounded by water.

AUDITORIUM: The auditorium seats two thousand people. There is additional area for 500 canoes (these are the choice seats) bringing the total capacity to 3,500 people. Three main aisles divide the auditorium into five main sections. In addition there are outside aisles and a promenade at the back of each section. The two side sections rise from four feet to thirteen feet above the water level; the two center sections rise from four feet to twenty-two feet above the water level. In the rear of each section are wide flights of stairs leading down to the landing docks. To the sides and rear of the auditorium radiate piers supplying dock facilities for seven hundred and sixty-eight small boats simultaneously. At the intermediate level, underneath the rear of the auditorium, are the lounges and toilets for men and women.

CANAL: Separating the auditorium from the stage is a canal sixty-four feet wide, a portion of which is roped off for five hundred canoes from which the occupants can watch the pageant without landing. At either end of this canal are traffic towers to control the movements of canoes.

STAGE: The stage consists of a series of platforms connected by stairs and underneath passages. Starting at eight inches above the water these platforms build up like a pyramid to the height of thirty-six feet above the water. On them are towers and walls serving as the background for the stage and eliminating the necessity of scenery. Surrounding the acting area of the stage are water passages, so that boats may take part in the pageants.

The irregular shape of the stage together with its numerous levels adds a great plasticity to stage direction and variety in ensemble movement.

UNDER STAGE: Underneath the high portion of the stage are three floors or dressing rooms for actors. These include sixteen single dressing rooms for principals with a bath for every two, six dressing rooms each accommodating thirty-six supers, with toilets and showers adjoining, and four assembling areas for the ensemble. Also under the stage are property rooms and an office.

GENERAL NOTES ON BUILDING: The structure is planned to be built on a series of barges that may be locked together in varying combinations that may be changed as desired, and anchored in a lagoon.

The stage is illuminated from flood lights situated to the rear of the auditorium and from side lights concealed on the stage group of towers. Auditorium aisles would be illuminated with lights on the ends of seats on each row. General illumination for the auditorium would be

from flood lights located both to the rear of the auditorium and on the stage, these latter serving as a "blinder" and replacing a curtain.

The entire water pageant theatre with its docks and canals is 468 feet long on the longitudinal axis and 632 feet wide at its widest point. The auditorium itself is 112 feet deep at the center and 204 feet wide at its greatest spread. From the point of the apron of the stage to the rear of the stage towers is 172 feet; and from wall to wall the stage is 161 feet wide. The towers at the back of the stage are 80 feet high. The average width of the canal dividing the acting area of the stage from the auditorium first row is 16 feet.

The Temple of Music

AN auditorium for audiences of various sizes, that may be inclosed or open air, with a tower for carillons, rehearsal rooms, studios, offices and dressing rooms.

AUDITORIUM: The auditorium has a seating capacity of 10,200 persons on its single floor level and is capable of seating an orchestra of 200 pieces and a chorus of 600. It is built in four sectional units. Each section is inclosed by its own dome so designed that it can roll back on itself, thus making an open air building. Movable partitions and portieres close off the various portions of the auditorium reducing the size of the audience by degrees down to as low as 1,200 people.

Each section of the auditorium has its own entrance foyer, box office and lounge. These entrance foyers are at the middle point in the rake of the auditorium floor; and open out on a wide common terrace. The lounge rooms are circular and are sunk slightly below the level of the entrances.

THE STAGE: The stage is a semi-circle and is inclosed by a half dome.

GENERAL NOTES: In addition to the entrance terraces there are two marquees that serve as exterior promenades projecting from the auditorium at two different levels.

The first two floors of the tower, those of the star-point design, house the rehearsal rooms. The center tower houses the carillons, while the rest of the tower space is devoted to offices, dressing rooms and studios. The basement under the auditorium is an entrance and parking space for 1,720 automobiles. There are two double lanes of incoming traffic, one double lane of outgoing traffic, and two single lanes of outgoing traffic. In this way there is a continuous stream of traffic circulating about each of the four entrances, making it possible for one hundred cars to unload per minute. In addition each of the three points of the tower at the water level forms a landing dock for those arriving by water.

The diameter of the semi-circular stage is 160 feet. The longitudinal axis of each of the four lobes of the orchestra is 288 feet. The diameter of each of the four circular lounges is 63 feet. The main entrance is 72

feet wide. The first marquee is 56 feet wide and the second 24 feet wide. The tower is 256 feet high. From the stage floor to the half dome above is 63 feet. The vaulted roof rises 120 feet above the water level.

Open Air Cabaret

Development of "Theatre Number Eighty"

AT several positions in the Exhibition Grounds, large restaurant areas must be located to handle the immense crowd, all of whom will want to eat at approximately the same hours. This plan is for a large open air cabaret that seats 2,500 people—an American "beer garden".

MAIN BUILDING: The main entrance is a three-story building containing: lounges for men and women, offices, dressing rooms for entertainers, rooms for electricians and mechanics, kitchens and pantries.

STAGE: Directly in front of the building is a small quadrant shaped stage from which runs a continuous platform five feet wide, and at an average height of four feet above the ground floor level, in the form of two interlacing squares. The sides of this platform are walled up and it forms the stage "apron." The performers, that is, singers, jugglers, acrobats, monologists, chorus, or band, enter from the stage quadrangle and meander around the "apron" platform, bringing their entertainment into intimate contact with the audience at the tables. The platforms are so designed that a singer on one platform does not interfere with a story-teller on another. Like a circus, there is a continual flow of entertainment.

WAITER'S PASSAGE: Underneath this apron is a runway for waiters, with three sub-pantries at intersectional points. Ramps lead to the under passageway from the floor level of the cabaret. The sinking of the runways for waiters below the level of the ground keeps the waiters from obstructing the view of those watching the entertainment, and keeps food and dishes out of sight most of the time. Waiters may pass one another within the runways.

DINING FACILITIES: The chairs and tables are placed around and in between the platforms. The height of the platform from the ground is great enough so that all entertainers can easily be seen from the furthest seats in the cabaret. The furthest point any diner is removed from the apron stage is a depth of five tables or the equivalent of 12 rows in a theatre.

ENTRANCES: Surrounding the whole cabaret are steps, with entrances at the four main axes. The entrance gates are high grills made of Neon tubes supported on duraluminum frames.

GENERAL NOTES ON BUILDING: The open air cabaret covers a plot of ground approximately 400 feet square. Of this area 7,000 square feet are taken up by the entrance building, and 65,000 square feet are given over to chairs and tables.

Divine Comedy Theatre

Theatre Number "One Forty-Seven"

A THEATRE designed for the purpose of housing adequately Norman Bel Geddes' project for staging Dante's *Divine Comedy,* which the Chicago World's Fair has announced as an intended production.

AUDITORIUM: The auditorium has a capacity of five thousand people. Like a Greek theatre, its plan is a half circle facing the stage without balconies or galleries. No proscenium or curtain divides the auditorium from the stage. A great dome spans the stage and part of the auditorium; the remaining part of the auditorium is covered by a ceiling that curves down into the exterior walls. The absence of balconies and galleries permits a steeper ramp so that each spectator can easily see over the head of the person in front of him.

ACTING STAGE: The stage, planned from the standpoint of the Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise episodes, is the only scenery required—all variations being achieved by lighting. In general the stage is circular in form and is composed almost entirely of steps. Its center is a pit, the slope of which rises on the far side to a height of sixty feet. The near side of the slope terminates in a ledge only one-fourth as high which steps down toward the audience in a series of terraces until it reaches the level of the bottom of the pit, where it terminates in a valley running halfway around the circle. Separating this valley from the audience is a wall seven feet high.

UNDERSTAGE: Passageways and stairways under the stage connect the dressing rooms with the pit, towers and other portions of the stage. Part of the space under the rear portion of the stage is taken up by dressing rooms occupying four floors and connecting the under structure of the tall and short towers on each side. Men's rooms are on one side and women's on the other.

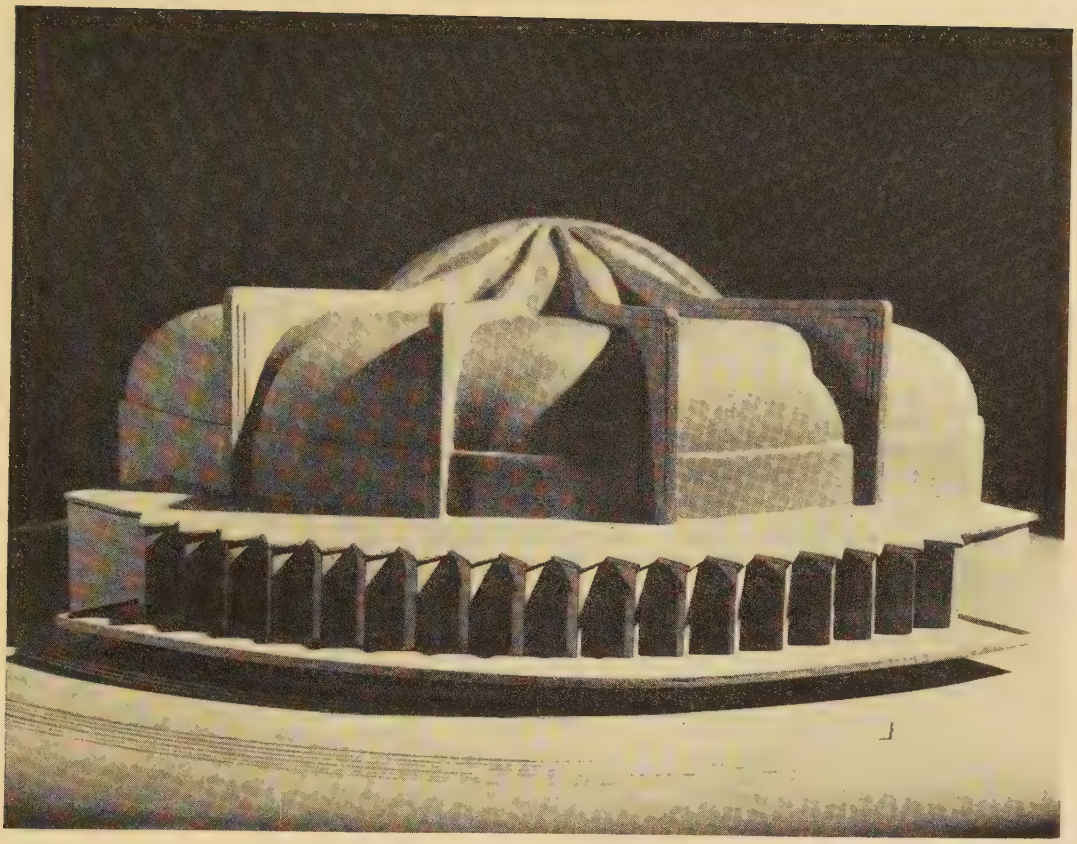
Five assembly rooms, each with a capacity of two hundred actors, are located at different positions connecting directly with the various entrances to the stage.

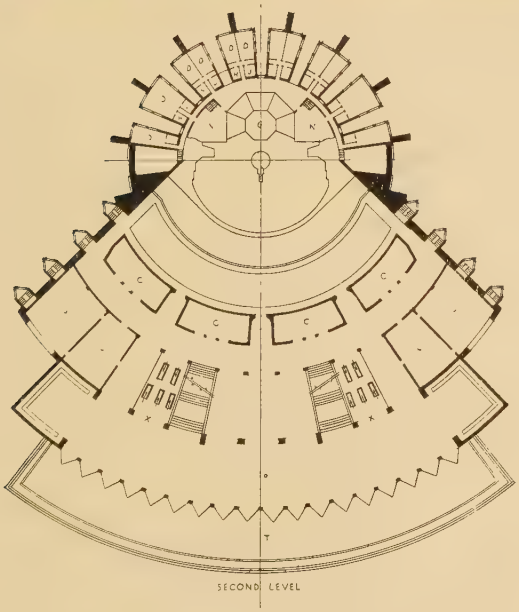
Large rooms for the accommodation of properties and costumes adjoin the assembly rooms.

The remaining space under the stage is taken up by three sound chambers and their supplementary rooms. These chambers are for the purpose of making various abstract sounds, magnifying or multiplying them to a desired intensity and then releasing them through one or all of nine tubes. One tube terminates at the top of each tower, another at the bottom of the pit, others below the seats at either side of the auditorium in the rear and directly overhead in the center of the auditorium.

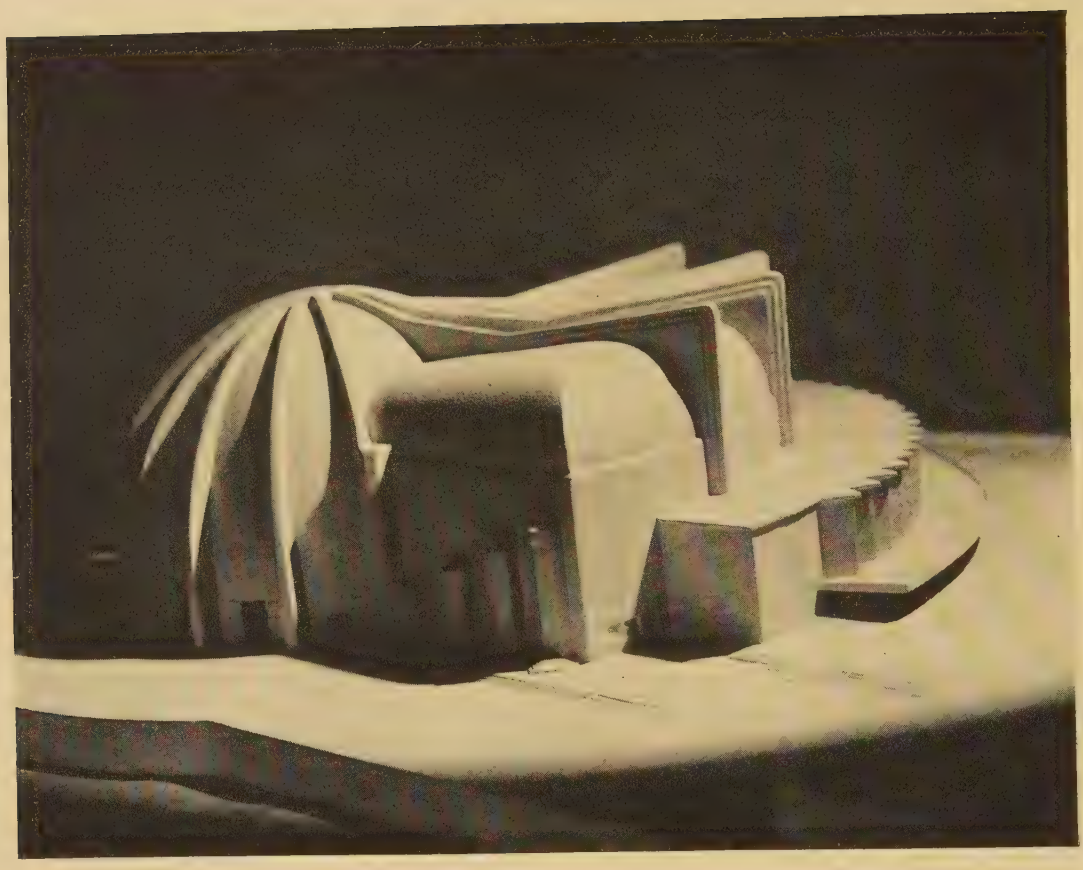
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES AND PUBLIC LOUNGES: These comprise the entrance on the first level, the promenade on the second level, and the open air terrace on the third level.

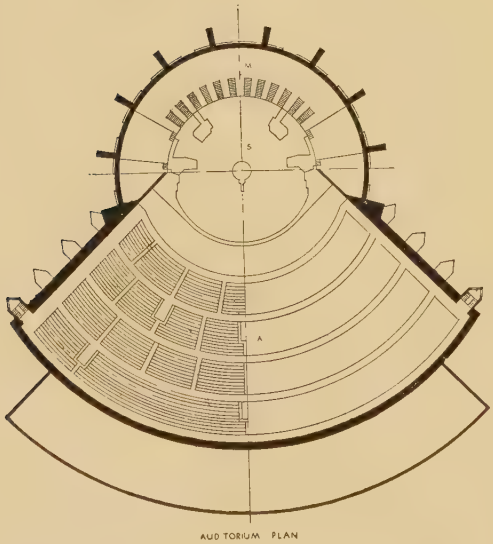
The ground floor of the auditorium is taken up with the entrance foyer,





THE DIVINE COMEDY THEATRE

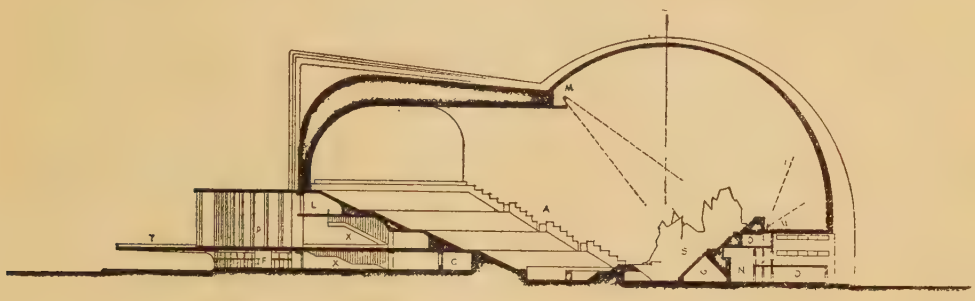




THE DIVINE COMEDY THEATRE

box offices, waiting room, retiring rooms, hospital. Leading from the entrance to the second and third levels are two wide stairways and four wide escalators. There are four additional exterior stair exits on each side of the auditorium.

A wide promenade with long glass windows opening out on a cantilevered terrace that also forms the *porte-cochère* comprises most of the



LONGITUDINAL SECTION

The Divine Comedy Theatre

second level. In addition there are buffets and lounge rooms for men and women. On this level are the entrances to the first two tiers of seats.

The third level has a narrower promenade and entrances to the last two tiers of seats. The roof of the terrace below forms an open air terrace for this level.

General Notes on Building: Galleries for lamps and electricians are concealed in the ceiling dome, and light pits behind the stage. All the lighting is controlled from a single switchboard.

The framing of the dome and ceiling of the auditorium is exposed on the exterior as part of the architectural design, thus eliminating the usual "covering" and thereby lessening the cost of the structure.

The distance from the front of the stage to the back of the auditorium is 144 feet and the spread of the auditorium at its widest point is 376 feet. The diameter of the stage is 125 feet. From the floor of the first row in the auditorium to the ceiling measures 104 feet; whereas the top of the dome is 140 feet above the stage floor level at the center of the pit. The five large assembly rooms for the chorus are each approximately 24 by 28 feet. The entrance foyer is 52 feet wide and 312 feet long. The promenade above the entrance foyer is the same width, but the addition of a buffet at either end increases the length to 383 feet.

"FIERCE AND LUXURIOUS DOLORES"

By M. Willson Disher

IN THE dim light of his shop in Charing Cross Road, my bookseller brought out a scrapbook concerning Adah Isaacs Menken. "Collected," I thought as I saw her charms either heavily enveloped in crinolines for private life or notoriously half-naked for the stage, "by somebody almost as infatuated with her as I am." If ever your heart has stirred because of some ancient portrait, you may understand what I felt while looking at these photographs. Or perhaps yourself is aware of the magic of the Menken. "Fierce and luxurious Dolores, sleepless and deadly," as Swinburne called her.

Menken's mother, who lived in New Orleans, was of Spanish stock; she married an Irishman (James McCord) from London. It is the elder Miss McCord, born in the June of 1835, who became Menken. We may skip some of the details of her career, but three early influences must be noted: first, the "literary" education provided by a step-father; next, the necessity (through his death) of earning her living at an early age as a dancer; and then, after she had spent a few terms as a teacher of French at a ladies' seminary, her engagement in a circus where she learned how to ride for show.

She took her first husband at seventeen, and there was a divorce. At twenty-one she married her Jewish singing-master, Alexander Isaacs Menken, and adopted the Hebrew faith for life. But though willing to renounce her former religion for his sake, she drew the line at giving up cigarettes: so, pending another divorce, she became an actress—specializing in breeches parts. She spent some time as model for a sculptor and that upset her imaginative balance still further. Yet at twenty-four she threw art to the winds—unless she saw Apollo Belvedere in the form of a prize-fighter—and became the wife of Heenan, the Benicia Boy. That marriage began in the spring of 1859 and ended in the autumn. The next

spring she was murdering Lady Teazle in New York whose playgoers were not nearly so considerate toward her as those of the South had been. From the June of 1861, in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis and New York, Menken was at last acting a part which she could act. Her success was so great that all her biographers are apparently unaware that a Civil War was in progress.

What was the enthralling play? Nothing more than the frowsy old melodrama made out of Byron's *Mazeppa,* with a twist of plot to escape any breach of the seventh commandment. For thirty years audiences in London and New York had heard the Tartar captive at a Polish court make love to the Castellan's daughter and seen him bound, as punishment, to the back of the wild horse which carried him back to father. For thirty years audiences had yawned over its half-hours with the best sentiments, and been only mildly startled by the final battle and Bengal lights. But for thirty years they had seen merely male Mazeppas. Menken's great contribution to theatrical history was the effrontery of presenting herself as the first female Mazeppa—prepared not only to be bound to the wild horse but to be "stripped" beforehand. While thousands were dying in the daily conflicts of the Civil War, while Menken herself was divorcing Heenan and marrying a professional humorist to see how far his sense of humour would carry him in private life, the wild horse of Tartary carried her right across America from Broadway to the gold-rush townships of California.

But as there were now second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and several more female Mazeppas, Menken decided to go where she would be not only the first, but the only female Mazeppa. On April 22nd, 1864, she sailed from 'Frisco in a fast clipper for England, as both pilgrim and conqueror. But when she went to the offices of London theatre managers known to New York, she found that one and all had made up their minds that *Mazeppa* was a worn-out rag which the theatres had flung to the tenting circus.

Menken sat alone in her hotel contemplating the great gulf fixed between herself and the famous of London, until she had a visitor. His name, she read on the card, was E. T. Smith. But it meant nothing to her.

Edward Tyrrel Smith was undoubtedly the English Barnum, however mute and inglorious he may seem now. There never was a showman so full of unrelated ideas. Though an admiral's son,

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he began life as a red waistcoated Bow Street runner. Then he became a publican in Red Lion Street, Holborn. When Mrs. Bloomer gave to the world a garment whose name delighted the delicate ears of her day and shocks (for some obscurely Freudian reason) the indelicate ears of ours, he made the barmaids of his tavern wear it. This so attracted custom that he amassed funds enough to finance a bonnet-shop at Brighton, a song-and-supper room in the Strand, a restaurant in the vaults of the Royal Exchange, and a host of pleasure resorts, ranging from opera at Her Majesty's to orgies at Cremorne. At the sale of any kind of opera house, theatre, music-hall or circus, he would make the highest bid, flourish a £1,000 banknote to show means, and trust to luck to raise funds afterwards. That £1,000 banknote, which he always carried in his pocket, was hired from a money-lender at the rate of £1 a day. His friends all believed it was spurious. One of them at a luncheon held out another £1,000 note. Smith took it, rolled it into a ball, dropped it into a spoonful of soup and swallowed it.

There was a time when he had been genuinely impressed. This happened when Sayers and Heenan met one chilly April morning in 1860. That fight had moved him to the soul, and he was now ready to plead the cause of the Benicia Boy before the wife to whom the prizefighter wished to be reconciled. However, it was not Adah Isaacs Menken who listened, but Edward Tyrrel Smith. She unpacked the costume of the first female Mazeppa, and he arranged for her to appear at Astley's, the old circus-theatre on the south side of Westminster Bridge. Protests were made against importing the American "naked drama", which was what he had counted on. But Menken was already primed. "I have long been a student of sculpture," the former artist's model declared, "and my attitudes, selected from the works of Canova, present a classicality which has invariably been recognized by the foremost of American critics."

In majestically quilted crinoline and sweeping hat she drove through the town in a landau and pair adorned with sleigh bells. Her short black hair, curled close to her head, her dark eyebrows and dark eyes had the right touch of "foreignness" necessary to the happiness of playgoers in the 'sixties. There was firmness in the straight line of her small mouth, and in the carriage of her head.

There was, however, a hint of the retroussée in her nose, and her cheeks had fulness enough to justify the word plump. She brought with her the spirit of emancipated womanhood. That is to say, she could not, no matter what might be said of her behaviour, be dismissed as a frail beauty of the footlights. She had "views." She did not believe that marriage was good for woman—"Somehow, they all sink into nonentities after this epoch in their existence." Good wives, she said, were rarely clever, and clever women rarely good. What shocked the public far more was what had shocked poor Alexander Isaacs Menken. She was always smoking. At Astley's an attendant followed her with a tray to capture cigarette ends.

Yet life in the 'sixties, when she first came to London, was very much more "modern" than it is now. If you still believe that the Mid-Victorians were all prunes and prisms, try to get hold of a copy of "London in the Sixties," by One of the Old Brigade, a little masterpiece which may cost you as much as sixpence or a shilling second-hand. When your stomach has been thoroughly upset by reading of such merry pranks as the release of sewer rats in a ball-room or a window party at a public hanging, just try to imagine what chance anyone stood of shocking a society as degraded as theirs. But Adah Isaacs Menken managed it—though her performances on the stage were not the main cause.

Astley's doors opened on October 3, 1864, to admit a vast press of spectators. So well had Smith done his work that there was an outbreak of applause at her first appearance, dressed as the Tartar captive, disguised as the page of the Polish Castellan. After declaiming each line with plenty of foreign accent, she struck a pose "as if with the view of satisfying an audience of photographers." But in the scene where Mazeppa marched into the apartments of the Count Palatine to fight him for the love of Olinska, the Castellan's daughter, Menken dropped her attitudinizing and fought with "wonderful vigour and spirit" until the would-be bridegroom was overcome.

Here the audience held its breath in exquisite anticipation. The Castellan was about to wreak his vengeance by ordering "the punishment inflicted on rebel slaves." First Mazeppa must be stripped. This was the great moment of the play. Menken retained, of course, the tight fleshings which had been properly worn

by previous Mazeppas in this situation, but instead of the usual dark brown "half-body", she had loose folds of white linen which descended only slightly towards the knee, and left "the upper limb exposed". Some spectators might murmur: "Not the sort of thing one would care one's sister to see," but others had been educated by Smith into thinking not of their sisters but of the ladies of ballet or burlesque. Only a very small minority were bold enough to observe that the Mazeppa on Astley's stage was better clothed than those of the hoardings. Even the female portion of the audience, which was as enthusiastic in its applause as the masculine, breathlessly watched the binding with many a thong of hero to horse. All, shuddering, beheld the pair rush over the raking platforms, followed by the heads of wolves with movable jaws. The curtain fell amid a storm of cheers and Menken was twice led forward by Smith. In the next act she posed to represent Mazeppa's gradual awakening, amid a snow clad landscape, from the recollections of his fearful ride to the comprehension of his rescue by the Tartars of his father, the Abder Khan. On the abdication of the Abder Khan in Mazeppa's favour, she bestrode the wild horse in masculine fashion, and after marshalling her troops—Astley's stud of forty horses and company of two hundred performers—she responded to a clamorous recall by waving her acknowledgments from the saddle.

Menken had, to borrow the thunder of Smith's rhetoric, "enchained the Old World" as she had "astonished and enthralled the New." Each night the house was packed. During the first month of the run, Dickens was unable to find a seat. He had left his office on one of his strolls to cool "a boiling head" and was drawn to Astley's. "Standing room only" was the answer at the box-office. Dickens asked for a box. The clerk, recognizing him, said there was not one to be had but he could have a seat in Mr. Smith's box. Dickens preferred to walk away. Menken heard of it with a pang of disappointment. She at once wrote the great man a lengthy letter of apology. The answer was not genial enough to enable her to make offers of friendship, and there is no evidence for the gossip which links his name with hers.

She played at Astley's for ten weeks. When *Mazeppa* had to make way for another pantomime, she went to Paris and was taken to see Dumas in his rooms in the Rue Saint Honoré. We know she was delighted with his large face and great mop of hair, and

not repelled by the darkness of skin which he had inherited from his grandmother, a West Indian Negress. This much is proved by the two photographs they had taken together. In one Dumas is fully dressed. In the other—a second pose at the same sitting—he has had to take off his frock coat, waistcoat and tie so that Menken may place her head close to his heart while composing herself into a state of dreamily soulful content. Since the first was not compromising enough, the second had to be taken so that she might possess a souvenir of her conquest. Then she sent the negatives to a firm which supplied the public with portraits of celebrities, and copies were sold in the streets. Though his friends were scandalized Dumas raised no objections to Menken's idea of conducting their little romance as though it were an advertising campaign. They enjoyed the wild, careless life he had led ever since he "let fall the pen to take up the frying-pan." But he was not much disturbed when the time came for Menken's departure. Why she left him I cannot say, but it is not difficult to guess. Possibly their romance ended in a scrimmage, threats of bloodshed, drawn knives, yells and screams—possibly not.

Anyhow Menken's first intimacy with the great ended, and she went back to San Francisco in the spring of 1865 to perform in a circus for a while. Early that summer her "matchless inspired realization of Byron's sublime ideal" was again beheld at Astley's. It had altered somewhat. Critics the year before had described her as slim. Now they argued whether she padded. One of the "supers" who lifted her on to the horse, gripped her by the leg to supply evidence. Though she boxed his ears, he returned good for evil by testifying that all of her was real. At Christmas she returned to New York, and in the summer of 1866, married James Paul Barclay, an outside broker on Wall Street. Their home on Seventh Avenue was named (in honour of Dickens) Bleak House. It proved so for him. After his fortune had been squandered, he left her, and was found dead in Philadelphia without a cent. She returned to England to play *Mazeppa* in Liverpool and London, and at the end of the year went to France where kings and princes were among her admirers in the theatre.

Back in London in '67, she held a salon at her hotel where Dante Gabriel Rossetti visited her. She was interested in him, but far more interested to find that he was the friend of the author of

Dolores, which was then firing the imagination of undergraduates and other morally rebellious souls. On reading its invitation to an imaginary lady to "come down and redeem us from virtue", she appointed herself Swinburne's Galatea. She asked Rossetti to describe him, and was told to see him herself. She purposed to visit his rooms at 22a, Dorset Street, Portman Square, uninvited. In bantering mood Rossetti commented that he supposed she would stay. After he had challenged her to do so and they had laid a wager of £10 over the deed, she set out for Dorset Street at once.

This, I suppose, deserves to rank as the most surprising moment in a very surprising life. If we accept the general opinion that Swinburne's experience of "lips intertwisted and bitten till the foam has the savour of blood" and "hair loosened and soiled in mid-orgies with kisses and wine" was as phantasmagoric as these phrases suggest, then we may understand his alarm that evening. On opening the door, he found himself confronted by overwhelming masses of velvet and lace that relentlessly advanced upon him. In language of the kind then described as "Zolaesque" she plainly said she had come to stay till morning. She did stay. Yet the £10 Rossetti sent her was returned.

She told Swinburne that her name was Dolores and he was ecstatic though (considering that she had never used it before) he had only her word for it. They were quite happy, until provincial engagements took her away. On her return in December, he did not hurry to see her. "Let me know, as soon as may be, if you see Dolores before I do," he wrote (on December 9, 1867) to a friend. "Tell her with my love that I would not show myself sick and disfigured in her eyes. I was spilt last week out of a hansom and my nose and forehead cut to rags—was seedy for four days and hideous." In the January of 1868 he was worried with "influenza, lovemaking, rather unwholesome things such as business, money, et cetera." When he recovered, he was led to the photographers. Though not persuaded, like Dumas, to part with his frock-coat, he posed with Menken, gazing into her eyes while holding her hand, in the "you and I together, Love" style, strongly recommended to engaged couples. As she sat down while he stood, he was able to tower above her by at least three or four inches and thus any unfortunate suggestion of the female dominating the male, was avoided. "Both come out very well," was Swinburne's comment. Menken

was also pleased. She sent the negative to the firm of distributors in Paris, and pictures of herself with Swinburne, like those of herself with Dumas, were sold in the streets. Swinburne heard of it. He also heard that copies of *Dolorida,* a sonnet he had written for her in French, were being circulated. There was "a great row".

Swinburne was now in his prime, not having reached the middle of his long life, while his Dolores, though of about the same age, was nearing the end of hers. One of the Mid-Victorian humorists has described how, at this time, he called on her one day at noon, and found her, in a venerable morning robe, breakfasting on a red herring. "She looked," he says, "rather sallow by daylight, but was most kind and courteous, still extremely taciturn." Sallow looks were but to be expected, for she was suffering from an abscess under the left side which, undiagnosed almost to her death, began to form from the time she first rode the untamed steed before London's amazed stare. And taciturnity would not be unnatural in a lively creature afflicted with dull, spiritless lovers. "Friends", she wrote, "fly from me, only to fill my being with the painful remembrance of their lost love for me—even me! Once the blessed and chosen!" The next line of that letter may give the complaint a humorous twist by describing herself as "a royal tigress waiting in her lovely jungle the coming of the king of forests. Brown gaiters not excluded." But she would have been less than human not to have suffered from the egoism of literary lovers. "Yours, through all stages of local degradations," she signed herself, and the phrase seems to have meaning when you think of this citizen of the world playing *Mazeppa* in provincial theatres while her strength was failing. When she appeared on the stage of Sadler's Wells on May 11, 1868, it was for the last time.

She had been at great pains to have a collection of her poems, entitled *Infelicia* published. She waited with impatience, during the slow stages of the printing, correcting proofs and finding fault with the frontispiece. "Perhaps," she wrote, "I am a little vain—all women are—but the picture is certainly not beautiful. I have portraits that I think beautiful, I dare say they are not like me, but I posed for them." Still there were delays and her illness was growing acute. She went to Paris, hoping to make another public appearance, but at the second rehearsal she was unable to stand. She could not eat, and all she could drink was iced water. After

struggling from her bed, she travelled to a village a few miles from Paris, but the effort overcame her. She was brought back, and on August 10, 1868, at the age of 33, she died. They buried her in Père la Chaise, but the next year the Rothschild family had her body removed to Mont Parnasse and on her tombstone cut the words "Thou knowest."

Her lovers were not kind to her memory. "These ghosts of mine," she had said, "are sad soft-footed things that wear my brain and live on my heart, that is, the fragment I have left to be called heart." They gave her little in return. "Poor girl, why was she not her own friend?" was all Dumas could say, thinking of her in the way the world thought of him. Swinburne was ill for some days through "the great shock" of her death. "She was most lovable, as a friend as well as a mistress," he said then. But after a year or two, he had so completely recovered from what he called his "real grief" that, on visits to Oxford, he would say that when she wished to speak of poetry in the mornings he told her, "My darling, a woman with such beautiful legs should not bother about poetry." In a letter he described how, "When poor old Menken was close on the end of her life's farce-tragedy," a Parisian journalist had circulated the report that she was "about to play Psyche to my Cupid" in a new ballet or opera-bouffe. While living at "The Pines" his ideas changed; he denied that he was the author of *Dolorida.* The MS., in his writing, still exists.

THE TEATRO DI TORINO

A Playhouse with Open Doors to All the Arts

By GUGLIELMO ALBERTI

THE Teatro di Torino offers its audiences representations of contemporary art in great variety: Italian and foreign dramatic companies, ballet troupes and individual dancers, ancient and modern lyric operas, music of all periods. It can not be said that its activities are of an experimental character; they tend essentially to a search for the best in the newest—and the new in the best of all times and countries. This article is hardly more than a record of the names of certain outstanding events to illustrate the way the theory of the theatre works out in practice.

As long ago as 1923-24, through the initiative of Mr. Richard Gualino, a cultured amateur and collector of works of art, there appeared from time to time in Turin theatres famous dancers such as Alexandre and Clotilde Sakharoff and Mary Wigman with her school. In the Spring of 1925 in the private theatre constructed for him in his own house by the painter, Felice Casorati, Mr. Gualino offered to a group of his guests a series of concerts, dances and recitations, all inspired by modern taste. Later, anxious not only to achieve authentic theatrical performances but also to render them accessible to the public, Mr. Gualino rebuilt an existing theatre, with the help of Mr. Guido M. Gatti, the general manager. Up-to-date machinery and devices for stage lighting were installed and at the end of the year the Teatro di Torino was inaugurated with an opera by Rossini, which had not been performed for years: *l'Italiana in Algeri,* under the direction of Maestro Vittorio Gui. This was followed by *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss, directed by Dr. Otto Erhardt of the Stuttgart Landestheater, with scenery and costumes by Ernst Pils. Strauss himself was present at the performance and afterwards conducted two concerts of his own compositions.

Next came Pirandello with his company, again followed by a series of orchestral concerts, directed by Maestro Gui; then for the

first time in Italy the performances of George and Ludmilla Pitoëff, who gave, with great success, *Henry IV, Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Pirandello, *The Power of Darkness* by Tolstoi, *Camille* by Dumas and *L'ame en peine* by Jean-Jacques Bernard, and showed themselves unsurpassed in Shaw's *Saint Joan* and in the delicate rendering of Claude Anet's little provincial comedy, *Mademoiselle Bourrat.*

After two Cortot concerts came a series of dance recitals: the stylized brahminic, buddhistic and Egyptian figures of Nyota-Inyoka; the fanciful choreographic episodes of the Russian Romantic Ballet company (especially successful with *Le Trapeze,* music by Prokofieff) and the two Sakharoffs whom the Turin audience had already had the opportunity of applauding.

One of the productions especially worthy of attention was Feo Belcari's *Sacra Rappresentazione di Abramo e Isacco.* This play, performed for the first time in 1449, is an elaborate example of the kind of spectacle which flourished in the Middle Ages. The performance at the Teatro di Torino was accompanied by music written and conducted by Ildebrando Pizzetti, with scenes and costumes by Gigi Chessa, who had designed the *Italiana in Algeri*, and with Ernst Lert, *regisseur* at the Scala Theatre of Milan, as stage manager and choreographer.

Another series of important concerts preceded the presentation of three lyric operas arranged by Vittorio Gui: Gluck's *Alceste*, G. F. Malipiero's *Sette Canzoni* and Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole.* In the selection of this new group of operas, care was shown not only to keep the ancient and modern side by side, but to interweave them. *Alceste*, for example, was presented in the baroque manner, heightened to accentuate certain characteristics proper to the period in which the opera was written, but seen in modern perspective. This was excellently carried out in Chessa's scenery and costumes.

The first season ended with that special form of slightly theatrical religiosity expressed in Verdi's *Messa da Requiem,* closing a list of activities which serves to show the many and varied fields which the directors of the theatre intended to explore. Here are a few of the most important productions of succeeding years.

In January 1927 the Diaghilev Ballet gave a series of fourteen performances after several years' absence from Italy. Among the principal dancers with the troupe were Tcherniceva, Sokolova, Massine, and Lifar. With their celebrated old repertoire the com-

BONAVENTURA UNCOVERS THE DOG

The Teatro di Torino has proved a generous host to all forms of theatre. Above, scene from a play for children by Sergio Tofano. At left stands Bonaventura, a figure greatly loved by Italian children.

L'Italiana in Algeri

Set by Virgilio Marchi for the Teatro di Torino production at Paris of Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri.* (*Photograph by Achay*)

pany presented as novelties *Les Biches* of Poulenc, *Les Matelots* by Auric and Riete's *Barabau.*

In February of the same year the Pitoëffs returned. If they did not altogether convince us as Hamlet and Ophelia, still the extraordinary unity of the company's acting aroused hearty admiration. Their other plays were *The Inspector-General* by Gogol, *Life Is a Dream* by Lenormand, and *L'indigent* by Vildrac. Especially successful, and with an extremely clever mis-en-scène, was Andreyev's *He Who Gets Slapped* and Cocteau's *Orphée* presented with his *Mariés de la Tour Eiffel.* The Pitoëff company returned once again for a few extra performances in March 1929, presenting as novelties Shaw's *Caesar* and *Cleopatra,* Tolstoi's *Living Corpse* and *The Three Sisters* by Tchekov.

In 1927, too, came what may be considered the theatre's most important opera season. The moderns were represented by Franco Alfano's *Madonna Impria*, and by Vittorio Gui, conductor of the season, who presented his own composition, the musical fable, *La Fata Malerba.* Then, Rossini's *La Cambiale di matrimonio,* a musical comedy written when he was eighteen years old and performed for the first time at the San Moise Theatre in Venice in 1810, *La Serva Padrona* by Pergolese and Mozart's admirable *Cosi fan tutte.* Theodore Komisarjevsky was entrusted with the stage management and design, and as a result of the success of this opera season the management of the Teatro di Torino was invited to give a series of performances at the Theatre des Champs Elysées in Paris, under the direction of Tullio Serafin, of the Metropolitan, New York.

The Teatro di Torino has welcomed to its stage the company of the Studio des Champs Elysées under the direction of Gaston Baty, which in December 1927 gave *Maya* by Gantillon, *Têtes de Réchange* by Jean Pellerin, and *Cesaire* by Jean Schlumberger. But perhaps the most interesting and important performances have taken place in the season just past (1929-30), which began with productions by the Habima and closed with those of the Kamerny Theatre of Moscow, directed by Tairoff. The Habima Theatre gave: *The Dybbuk, The Golem, The Crown of David,* an adaptation of Calderon's *I ricciolo di Assalonne* by Izhac Lanad, *The Wandering Jew* by David Pinsky and *The Treasure* by Scholem Aleikem. And Tairoff recently presented a short series of varied performances: *The Storm* of Ostrowsky and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*

by O'Neill, on the one hand, and on the other, the old Lecocq operettas *Giroflé-Girofla* and *Jour et Nuit.* There were also the deliciously fantastic plays of Sergio Tofano around a figure of his own creation, Signor Bonaventura, acted by the Almirante-Rissone-Tofano company, and performances by Jacques Copeau and his Copiaus du Vieux-Colombier of Copeau's *L'Illusion* and *L'Ecole des Maris* by Molière.

As particularly representative of the variety of the dance program mention may be made of Dussia Bereska, formerly of the Rudolf von Laban group, Harald Kreutzberg and Yvonne Georgi, and the Eurythmics School of the Dornach Goetheanum. Lastly, it was at the Teatro di Torino that the Fisk Jubilee Singers were heard with their repertoire of Negro Spirituals and Plantation Songs and that Paul Robeson gave his first and only recital in Italy.

This review, apparently so detailed, is in reality incomplete, so numerous are the activities of the Teatro di Torino, an undertaking which does honour to its promoters and directors, and which is followed with eager interest.

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

A set by Guido Salvini for the first scene of *The Barber of Seville* as sung by the company of the Teatro di Torino on the occasion of its visit to Paris. (*Photograph by Achay*)

La Fata Malerba

Set by Theodore Komisarjevsky for Vittorio Gui's presentation of his own composition, the musical fable, *La Fata Malerba,* at the Teatro di Torino. (*Photograph by Guido Cometto*)

THE DEVIL COMES TO ALCARAZ

A Warm Weather Fantasy

By WILLIAM H. FULHAM

Cast

CASILDA.
DONA JOSEFA, *her mother.*
DONA MARIA.
ISABELLA, CARMELITA } *Daughters to Dona Maria.*
DON RICARDO, *Mayor of Alcaraz.*
DON JULIO, *his son.*
DON MARIO, *friend to Julio.*
BONITO, *secretary to Don Ricardo.*
DON NICHOLAS.

SCENE: *The little town of Alcaraz, in New Castile. Late afternoon and evening of the day of the Fiesta of Cristobal. On stage at rise of curtain Casilda, Dona Josefa and Dona Maria.*

DONA MARIA: You are agitated, Dona Josefa.

JOSEFA: Agitated: Ha!

MARIA: Was it not today that the marriage contract between Casilda and Don Julio was to be signed?

JOSEFA: So I thought. But alas . . .

MARIA: Something has happened? Casilda . . . ?

JOSEFA: No. Don Julio refuses. Imagine: he went through with it to the very end, even to signing the contract. Then, when I thought everything was settled, he changed his mind.

MARIA: By all the saints! Again!

JOSEFA: My mind is in a whirl. I do not know whether it was the third refusal of the second man or the second refusal of my third prospect.

MARIA: But what is the matter?

JOSEFA: Always the same: there is something that Casilda lacks.

MARIA: But what?

JOSEFA: Something that men find desirable in women. Who can tell? Charm, vivacity, the appeal that women have for the opposite sex? My head is raging trying to think what it is. All I know is that it has always proven a fatal bar to matrimony. I tell you, Dona Maria, when a fond mother has seven daughters, the problem of finding husbands in a town like Alcaraz is all but impossible. Come, my child. Let us make another novena to the Saints that we may find a suitable husband for you before Eastertide. Are you going to vespers, Dona Maria?

MARIA: Wait a moment, Dona Josefa. Isabella and Carmelita have stopped at the convent to see Sister Philomene. Let me fetch them and we shall go together.

JOSEFA: The angelus has not rung. Make haste. [*Exit Dona Maria.*]

JOSEFA: Casilda, what caused Don Julio to change his mind so abruptly?

CASILDA: Nothing, mamma.

JOSEFA: Did you speak to him?

CASILDA: Scarcely at all.

JOSEFA: Perhaps that was it. Some men prefer talkative women, particularly before marriage. How did you stand?

CASILDA: Modestly, with down cast eyes.

JOSEFA: It is well to be modest. But not excessively so. There are things that even a dumb woman can do, with the right look in her eyes.

CASILDA: What is it that I lack, mamma? What is it that men want in women?

JOSEFA: Men never know what they want. The important thing is making men think they want what we have to give them. At any rate, you still have the marriage contract. Julio signed it.

CASILDA: Oh no. I gave it back to him.

JOSEFA: Casilda! By all the saints, you did nothing so stupid?

CASILDA: But I would never marry a man unless he wanted me.

JOSEFA: That's not the question. You had his agreement in writing. Not that we should use it, but it is a priceless thing to have a thing in writing. Especially from a man. And you give it back to him. I despair, Casilda. I weep that a daughter of mine should display so little practical intelligence. Where there is a signed contract, there is hope. But without it . . . My patience is worn out! So help me Casilda, if there is another one in Alcaraz who will marry you, he shall have your hand, if he be the devil himself. I take my oath upon it. My solemn oath.

[*Re-enter Dona Maria with Isabella and Carmelita.*]

MARIA: We are ready, Dona Josefa.

ISABELLA: Casilda, we sympathize with you.

CASILDA: Pray do not.

CARMELITA: Don Julio is difficult to please, they say.

MARIA: Shall we enter the church? Don Ricardo is coming down the plaza.

JOSEFA: No. I will speak with him.

[*Enter Don Ricardo and Bonito.*]

RICARDO: Ah, Dona Josefa. And ladies. [*He bows. They acknowledge it.*]

JOSEFA: Senor Don Ricardo . . .

RICARDO: I trust there are no hard feelings. I regret that my son, Julio, should be so headstrong as to refuse your daughter's lovely hand . . . especially after matters had gone so far.

JOSEFA: I assure you it is nothing, Don Ricardo. Casilda is much sought after.

MARIA: I daresay you've become used to it now, dear Josefa. Three times it has happened that men have backed out . . .

JOSEFA: Must you remind me?

MARIA: We should be delighted to have Don Julio call of an evening, dear Don Ricardo. You know my two daughters Isabella and Carmelita. Famed for their beauty and their wit. We went to Madrid, recently, and would you believe it they called us—my daughters and me—the three graces. Of course, I was a child when I married, and everyone says that I look like an older sister . . . I tell them all that I am a widow . . . but fancy free . . .

JOSEFA: Certainly, dear, something has improved your complexion . . . but whether it be widowhood . . .

RICARDO: I shall speak to my son. As for me, I regret that Julio should have acted as he did, even after he signed the contract . . .

JOSEFA: We think so little of it, that Casilda, upon my direction, returned the contract to your son. I should be the last in the world to hold anyone to a bargain against his will . . . Come Casilda. To vespers.

CASILDA: The angelus has not rung . . .

JOSEFA: But Don Julio is coming. With a friend. Do you want to see him? [*Enter Don Julio and Don Mario.*]

JULIO: Papa . . .

RICARDO: Yes, my son.

JULIO: This is Mario, my friend of whom I spoke.

RICARDO: Welcome to Alcaraz. You arrive at a good time. The town is crowded with visitors. We celebrate the Fiesta of Cristobal today.

MARIO: A local fiesta?

RICARDO: For five hundred years, without interruption, Alcaraz has celebrated the Fiesta of Cristobal. Quite a legend! Surely, Julio has told you of it?

MARIO: The stories that Julio tells of Alcaraz do not concern its feast days.

RICARDO: It's a charming legend, I assure you. Five hundred years ago, the devil came to Alcaraz.

MARIO: In person?

RICARDO: In person! Disguised as a gentleman! No one knew the difference until he quite boldly proclaimed himself Prince Lucifer, and equally boldly he announced that he would not leave Alcaraz until he had married a virgin in the market place.

JOSEFA: Casilda, I fear this story . . .

CASILDA: Please, mamma . . .

MARIO: Proceed . . .

RICARDO: You can fancy the consternation it caused. Obviously, we could not sacrifice a maiden.

MARIO: What did you do?

RICARDO: We tried a ruse. The Mayors of Alcaraz have always been noted for their intelligence. [*He bows.*] We arranged a mock wedding. The most beautiful maiden of Alcaraz, the lovely

Lady Cristobal, was led to the market place. Lucifer was infatuated by her beauty, so much so that he lost his wits. At a given signal, she dropped her prayer book. The devil, being a gentleman, stooped to pick it up, and when he touched it . . .

MARIO: What?

RICARDO: His hands burst into flame, there was a flash of lightning, a rattle of thunder, the earth opened, and the devil disappeared. We were too clever for him, you see.

CASILDA: And the maiden Cristobal?

RICARDO: Was acclaimed the savior of Alcaraz. Immediately all the young men rushed to her parents and asked for her hand in matrimony.

CASILDA: Oh! And did she marry?

RICARDO: The wealthiest and the handsomest was her choice. It is in her honor that for five hundred years we have celebrated the Fiesta of Cristobal.

MARIO: And that was the end of the legend?

RICARDO: Not quite. The devil swore he would return to Alcaraz one day and be revenged upon us. Need I say we are ready for him? But welcome to our city. The festivity will reach its climax after the vesper hour. There will be dancing here in the market place. Visitors come from all over Spain. Two years ago, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince came from Madrid . . .

MARIO: Really . . .

RICARDO: Incognito. We gave him the keys of the city . . . on a velvet cushion. He complimented me upon my address of welcome.

MARIO: I can see that you orate . . .

RICARDO: Soft . . . the angelus. [*The angelus tolls. They stand a moment with bowed heads in silence. The bells continue. Then abruptly a trumpet sounds in the distance, growing louder and louder and finally sounding above the dying clamor of the bells. Bonito rushes in.*]

RICARDO: Who dares disturb the vesper bell?

BONITO: Your honor . . .

RICARDO: Well, speak, speak.

BONITO: A brilliant cavalcade has just entered the plaza.

RICARDO: So.

BONITO: In the name of an unknown prince, they ask where they can find the Mayor.

RICARDO: Perhaps His Royal Highness has returned. You told him?

BONITO: That you were here.

RICARDO: Fool, you might have given me time to change . . .

BONITO: He's coming even now.

RICARDO: His Royal Highness?

BONITO: A gentleman of his suite.

RICARDO: Fortunately, the town is brilliantly decked. You don't know who it is?

BONITO: Incognito . . .

RICARDO: I see! Like His Royal Highness . . . run to the City Hall. Fetch the keys of the city. And don't forget the velvet cushion!

BONITO: Yes, Your Honor.

RICARDO: Make haste, make haste!

CASILDA: How exciting.

JOSEFA: Come to vespers.

CASILDA: Mamma . . .

JOSEFA: Ah, well it is not every day that a prince comes to Alcaraz.

[*Enter Don Nicholas.*]

RICARDO: Your Royal Highness.

NICHOLAS: You mistake, Senor Don. I am only an emissary of his Highness.

RICARDO: In the name of Alcaraz, in the name of our citizens, I bid you welcome.

NICHOLAS: I come to make sure that my master is welcome to your city.

RICARDO: Alcaraz always stands ready to welcome distinguished guests.

NICHOLAS: No matter what they are distinguished for?

RICARDO: Two years ago his Royal Highness came from Madrid at this season. We celebrate the Fiesta of Cristobal. I have the honor of addressing . . . ?

NICHOLAS: For the moment, I must remain unknown. I may say, however, that my master does not come simply as a tourist. He comes to Alcaraz to find a bride.

[*Sensation.*]

DONA MARIA: Ah.

JOSEFA: [*To Ricardo.*] Present me.

RICARDO: May I introduce the Dona Josefa?

JOSEFA: As the mother of seven daughters, you are seven times welcome to Alcaraz. Casilda. [*Casilda comes forward.*] My eldest.

NICHOLAS: Charmed.

MARIA: [*To Ricardo.*] Will you present me? Come Isabella. Come, Carmelita.

RICARDO: The Dona Maria.

MARIA: [*To Nicholas.*] So charmed to meet you. Our balcony commands the plaza, where all the chief features of the celebration take place. We trust his Imperial Highness will honor us—my daughter, Isabella . . . my daughter Carmelita. In Madrid they call us the three graces. I feel more of a sister than a mother.

JOSEFA: All of my seven daughters are noted for their charm.

MARIA: Really, Josefa . . .

JOSEFA: Do not forget that I spoke to him first.

MARIA: But everyone knows that Casilda . . .

[*Re-enter Bonito with the keys of the city.*]

BONITO: Your honor, the keys of the city.

RICARDO: [*To Nicholas.*] Sire, though your master desires to honor our little city incognito, we nevertheless—nevertheless [*he unfurls a manuscript*] nevertheless greet him in the name of our distinguished citizens. If your master is seeking a quiet home, I shall hardly need remark that he will find the climate of Alcaraz admirable in all respects. Our rainfall is never excessive, and the heat is always tempered by a pleasant wind. The sanitary conditions . . .

JOSEFA: Is this a time to discuss sanitation?

RICARDO: In short, sir, in Alcaraz the fairest maidens in all Castile are to be found. In the name of our pure womanhood, in the name of our lovely maidens, I present to you the keys of our city and the freedom of our commonwealth.

[*He presents the keys to Nicholas.*]

NICHOLAS: Sir, I am deeply touched by this charming reception. I accept the honor graciously bestowed upon us and thank you one and all in the name of my master, Prince Lucifer . . .

BONITO: What?

RICARDO: You said?

LADIES: Did you hear?

NICHOLAS: Prince Lucifer . . .

RICARDO: You jest, Senor.

BONITO: He said?

NICHOLAS: Prince Lucifer. Five hundred years ago the devil came to Alcaraz. You treated him inhospitably, but as he said he would, he now returns. To-night, when your festivities are at their height he will marry one of your maidens in the market place.

MARIO: The legend, Don Ricardo.

RICARDO: This is a mad jest.

MARIA: [*To Nicholas.*] Senor, I withdraw my invitation.

NICHOLAS: I deplore your decision, Senora.

JOSEFA: And I, sir. Come, Casilda.

MARIA: [*To Ricardo.*] Such stupidity. You have presented the keys of our city to the devil.

RICARDO: I insist upon the return of the keys.

NICHOLAS: I keep the keys, for my imperial master. If you want them back, you must go to him.

JOSEFA: [*Softly to Ricardo.*] Don Ricardo.

RICARDO: Well . . . ?

JOSEFA: I feel that that man . . . is the devil himself.

RICARDO: [*Reflectively*] He seems so much of a gentleman.

JOSEFA: So many devils are.

RICARDO: We'll test him out. Pass before him and drop your prayer book.

JOSEFA: Come, Casilda. [*She crosses before Don Nicholas, drops her prayer book.*] O dear! [*They watch eagerly the next move of Nicholas.*]

NICHOLAS: [*Stooping, and gallantly restoring the book.*] Your book, Senora.

JOSEFA: I thank you, Senor.

RICARDO: It is not he! Five hundred years ago, my distinguished predecessor was faced by a similar situation. I am a man of action. I waste no words. Bonito!

BONITO: Your honor!

RICARDO: [*Rapidly*] Issue a proclamation, and see that it is carried to all quarters of Alcaraz. Say that all virgins shall at once be taken to the Convent of the Visitation and kept under lock and key until tomorrow dawn.

BONITO: [*Sing-songingly*] Si, Senor.

RICARDO: Let all husbands in Alcaraz look to their wives.

BONITO: Si, Senor.

RICARDO: And the widows shall look to themselves.

BONITO: Come, young ladies, to the convent with you.

[*He shoos the spectators to the convent.*]

JOSEFA: Come, Casilda, we shall return home for your sisters and seek refuge in the convent walls.

MARIA: We shall await you there, Dona Josefa. Come Isabella. Come, Carmelita. [*They exit.*]

RICARDO: Assemble the militia and have every street in Alcaraz guarded against the devil.

BONITO: Si, Senor.

RICARDO: Dispatch the civic police to such portions of the city as the devil would naturally seek out . . . you follow me?

BONITO: Si, Senor. And if the devil be found?

RICARDO: Bring him here, to the market place.

[*There is much activity during this scene. The citizens are moving to and fro. Bonito exits.*]

Inform your master that if he is caught, it will be worse for him. He shall not escape us.

NICHOLAS: You forget, Senor.

RICARDO: Forget what?

NICHOLAS: We have the keys of your charming city. [*Laughs.*]

[*Exit Ricardo. Nicholas is left alone. He follows with his eyes the last of the departing spirits, peering off stage right with his back to the church. In a moment Casilda steals cautiously from behind the church and mounts the steps.*]

CASLIDA: Senor.

NICHOLAS: [*Turning swiftly*] Senorita.

CASILDA: Do not come near me. You cannot hurt me. I am standing on the church steps.

NICHOLAS: Oh. [*He pauses.*] You wished to speak to me?

CASILDA: I wish you to go to your Master and inform him that I am ready to marry him at dusk this evening.

NICHOLAS: Senorita. You are not serious.

CASILDA: Quite serious. I stayed behind. I hid from Mamma.

NICHOLAS: So you could marry my master?

CASILDA: Yes, Senor.

NICHOLAS: But why?

CASILDA: Do you remember what happened to Cristobal five hundred years ago?

NICHOLAS: Oh, I see.

CASILDA: I shall go down in history as a heroine. Henceforth, it shall be the Fiesta of Casilda.

NICHOLAS: But—I daresay I'm sentimental—do you approve of marriages without love?

CASILDA: I see nothing to be gained by this aimless conversation. Make haste and deliver my message to your master. Or take me to him.

NICHOLAS: You are determined. Alas, if you must know, you must know. Little one, he is here.

CASILDA: Where? [*She looks around.*]

NICHOLAS: I.

CASILDA: You! [*A little note of disappointment creeps into her voice.*]

NICHOLAS: What's the matter?

CASILDA: I'm so disappointed. [*She sits on the church steps.*] You see I expected . . .

NICHOLAS: I know: the horns!

CASILDA: Yes. And a tail with a double prong at the end—like a pitchfork.

NICHOLAS: How absurd! There is no reason why I should be grotesque. I'm only a fallen angel.

CASILDA: But people say . . .

NICHOLAS: But people forget that unless we make sin attractive, we never get anywhere.

CASILDA: Are you quite sure that you're the devil?

NICHOLAS: Don't you believe it?

CASILDA: No. I'm sure you aren't. You can't be. You picked up that prayer book. If you had been the devil, you would have disappeared in a puff of flame.

NICHOLAS: I had on my asbestos gloves. [*He holds up his hands.*] Do you believe me now?

CASILDA: No, I don't. I'm still ready to marry you.

NICHOLAS: Marry me?

CASILDA: Yes, I'm sure I could reform you.

NICHOLAS: I was afraid you were going to say that.

CASILDA: Afraid? See here: why did you really come to Alcaraz?

NICHOLAS: I felt I should be forgotten entirely unless I made a personal appearance. Something had to be done.

CASILDA: Then you didn't come to marry a virgin?

NICHOLAS: I haven't the slightest intention of marrying. But if I did, I should hardly pick a virgin. I should prefer a widow or an amusing lady with a past.

CASILDA: I thought you were a gentleman.

NICHOLAS: I'm sorry.

CASILDA: Then you refuse to accept my sacrifice. Oh, if mother finds this out. [*She weeps.*]

NICHOLAS: What now?

CASILDA: You're the fourth.

NICHOLAS: Do you really want to get married?

CASILDA: Desperately.

NICHOLAS: But why?

CASILDA: A woman has no future until she marries.

NICHOLAS: But why should she want a future? The most interesting women are those with a past. Come, dry your eyes. I'll see what I can do. Perhaps I can help you as I helped Cristobal, five hundred years ago.

CASILDA: But Cristobal was beautiful.

NICHOLAS: Cristobal was as plain as an old shoe.

CASILDA: But the legend says . . .

NICHOLAS: My dear, you can't start a legend with an ugly woman. When I found Cristobal in the market place five hundred years ago, she was exactly in your position . . . ready to marry the devil himself to gain a future. No man wanted her until she became unattainable, then all men threw themselves at her feet.

CASILDA: So that's the truth of it.

NICHOLAS: You and I, my dear, will arrange a mock wedding. You announce that you are ready to sacrifice yourself for Alcaraz. Immediately all the young men will rush forward to save you from such a fate. When you have made your choice, drop your prayer book. I stoop to pick it up without any asbestos gloves. A puff of flame—I disappear.

CASILDA: But what do you get out of it?

NICHOLAS: I achieve my purpose. As long as I am talked about, I'm remembered. Next year Alcaraz will celebrate the Fiesta of Casilda. You become a local celebrity. As long as they celebrate the Fiesta, they will relate the legend. And they can't relate the legend without mentioning my name.

CASILDA: I'll do it. But tell me first, what is it I lack that men find desirable in women?

NICHOLAS: [*Looking at her critically*] Perhaps, it's because . . . because . . . you're not quite devilish enough.

CASILDA: Oh Lucifer.

NICHOLAS: To be successful with men, Casilda, never say yes, never say no. Always keep them wondering.

CASILDA: How puzzling.

NICHOLAS: It will become clearer to you as we go on.

[*Josefa rushes in followed by Ricardo and all the cast.*]

JOSEFA: Casilda! Casilda! My daughter! Where have you been?

MARIA: She's with the devil . . . !

JOSEFA: Casilda . . . !

CASILDA: Mamma . . . Mamma . . . he wants to marry me . . . !

RICARDO: Stop! She has been bewitched by this imp of Satan . . . !

MARIA: How terrible! Come Isabella! Come Carmelita!

CASILDA: I have decided to sacrifice myself for Alcaraz!

JOSEFA: Sacrifice . . .

CASILDA: I'll marry Prince Lucifer in the market place . . .

[*In wild gayety she dances across the stage.*]

JOSEFA: You will do nothing of the sort. She's bewitched by all the saints'!

MARIO: I say Julio, what a stunning girl.

JULIO: Undoubtedly.

MARIO: [*Advancing to Casilda.*] Senorita, haven't we met before, somewhere?

[*She moves away with the alluring nod.*]

MARIO: Such charm!

ISABELLA: Mamma, I should love to sacrifice myself in place of Casilda.

CARMELITA: I am the elder, Mamma. I detest matrimony, but for the sake of Alcaraz . . .

MARIA: As a mother I do not shrink from any sacrifice. If one of us must marry to save our city from the devil . . . let it be . . .

RICARDO: My dear Casilda. This is no place for you. May I see you home?

CASILDA: I fear not Senor. [*She flips her fan. He crosses to her.*]

NICHOLAS: The bridegroom awaits his bride. Senorita . . .

JOSEFA: My daughter . . . my daughter . . . I cannot permit it!

MARIO: Where is the chivalry of Alcaraz? If no man will step forward and save this lovely maiden from her fate, I, a stranger within your gates, will be her champion. Devil, I challenge you to combat for the lady. If I win, you depart without insisting upon this heinous marriage.

NICHOLAS: You challenge?

MARIO: Choose your weapons.

RICARDO: Sir, you mistake if you think there is no chivalry in Alcaraz. To save her Senor, I myself propose to wed her, if she will honor me. I am a widower . . . but fancy free.

JULIO: Papa, reflect . . .

RICARDO: My mind is made up.

BONITO: I am willing to marry the lady, if she will have me.

RICARDO: Fool.

MARIO: It was I who spoke first.

ISABELLA: Whomever you marry, Casilda, will you let me be your maid of honor.

NICHOLAS: We waste time. I have sworn to wed this maiden in the market place. It shall be done. The ring . . .

JOSEFA: I shall not permit it.

NICHOLAS: Senora, you forget your solemn oath.

JOSEFA: My oath?

NICHOLAS: Scarcely two hours since, upon the very spot where you are standing, you swore that the next who offered to marry your daughter would be given her hand, whether it were the devil himself. Did you or did you not swear that oath?

JOSEFA: But I never dreamed . . .

CASILDA: I heard you Mamma . . . Alas, I shall sacrifice myself . . .

JOSEFA: I am undone! I am undone!

MARIO: Where are your weapons? . . . devil!

NICHOLAS: After the wedding . . . come, my bride . . .

JULIO: I forbid this marriage.

NICHOLAS: You, Senor? Upon what grounds?

JULIO: Casilda is my affianced bride. I have it in writing. [*He displays a document.*]

JOSEFA: The marriage contract!

JULIO: We signed it this morning . . .

CASILDA: But you changed your mind.

JULIO: I'm always changing my mind. I claim my bride.

CASILDA: What shall I do?

NICHOLAS: I take off my gloves. [*He removes his gloves.*]

CASILDA: Oh yes! Of course! Mamma, your prayer book.

RICARDO: The girl has wit.

NICHOLAS: Come, I will marry you now.

CASILDA: As you will. [*She drops her prayer book.*]

NICHOLAS: Senorita [*As he stoops to pick it up the crowd closes in masking him from the audience. There is a crash of thunder, a flare of lightning, and sudden red flame. Excited cries from the populace.*]

JOSEFA: He's disappeared!

MARIA: Did you see when he touched the prayer book . . . ?

RICARDO: Alcaraz is saved!

THE CROWD: Long live Casilda.

JULIO: Casilda . . . how changed you are . . .

JOSEFA: I am not in favor of long engagements. Since Julio has made up his mind to marry, let the Civil ceremony take place here and now, to be followed by the religious ceremony at dawn.

JULIO: Are you willing, Casilda . . .?

CASILDA: If you love me, Julio . . .

RICARDO: Bonito, hasten to the Cabildo and return immediately with my address for such occasions . . .

JOSEFA: Come, we will get flowers for the ceremony.

[*They exeunt laughing and talking.*]

JULIO: How fascinating you are. What makes you so? I can't help wondering.

CASILDA: You must keep on wondering, Julio.

JULIO: One kiss, Senorita . . .

CASILDA: Only one, Senor.

THE SUMMER THEATRE

DESPITE the summer's reputation for inactivity, the warm months have seen a gay and far from dull season. Actors and directors alike have found an occasional production provides a pleasant seasoning for vacation days. The summer programs seem unusually free of box office considerations. Directors have apparently felt that their light hearted audiences are quite willing to behold experimental endeavors, and all the summer playhouses have maintained an unusually high standard of production.

The oldest of the summer theatres, that of the Lakewood Players at Skowhegan, Maine (famous for the Norman Bel Geddes production of *Hamlet* last summer) has had a busy season with a program including such diverse fare as Augustus Thomas's *The Witching Hour,* Phillip Barry's *Holiday* and Martin Flavin's *Broken Dishes.*

Broadway prices and more ($4.40) have prevailed at the auditorium of the Newport Casino where a company constantly augmented by Broadway stars has presented a well-balanced program including Robert Sherwood's *The Road to Rome,* John Drinkwater's *Bird In Hand,* A. A. Milne's *The Perfect Alibi* and John Galsworthy's *Loyalties.*

At the Cape Playhouse at Dennis, Cape Cod, where an enterprising art colony has established itself, the resident company has produced, among other plays, A. A. Milne's *Michael and Mary,* Sir James Barrie's *Mary Rose,* Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple* and Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife.*

One of the most successful and ambitious of the summer theatres has been the Berkshire Playhouse at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, directed by Alexander Kirkland and F. Cowles Strickland. The company there, aided by visiting stars, has produced *Romeo and Juliet,* Sierra's *The Romantic Young Lady,* Sir James Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton* and Luigi Chiarelli's *The Mask and the Face.*

The Hampton Players at Southampton attracted considerable

attention by producing the première of Moss Hart's *No Retreat* and by the production of a new comedy, *Let's Get Married,* by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett; both plays, it is rumored, will receive Broadway productions during the coming season. These players are among the most experimental of the theatre groups. While professional, they do not favor the star system, and they are interested primarily in original plays.

The Wharf Theatre at Provincetown has given the entire season over to experiments with the idea of producing five original plays by playwrights connected with this theatre.

An interesting theatre is that of the University Guild at West Falmouth, Massachusetts. College players from many colleges compete for places in the company and the theatre's third season has seen a different play each week for ten weeks.

The Manhattan Theatre Colony, formerly of Peterboro, New Hampshire, has been removed by its director, Walter Hartwig, to Bristol, Connecticut. There its company, aided by Margaret Wycherly and other prominent professional actors, has played Pinero's *Trelawny of the Wells,* Barrie's *Dear Brutus* and *The Second Round* by Halcott Glover.

The program of the Surry (Maine) Playhouse included George Kelly's *The Torch Bearers,* Sutton Vane's *Outward Bound,* and Noel Coward's *The Young Idea.*

In the middle west one of the outstanding summer performances was that of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presented in the Shell at Belle Isle by Jessie Bonstelle's Detroit Civic Theatre in conjunction with the Detroit Civic Orchestra. The performance, given on three successive evenings, was free to the people of Detroit.

Some of America's little theatres have rivaled the professionals in their activity during the summer months. The company and the director of the Cleveland Playhouse appeared for a month's season at the Chautauqua Institute at Chautauqua Lake, New York, under the title of The Chautauqua Repertory Theatre. Among their productions were Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest,* Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* and Henry Davies' *The Mollusc.*

The Chicago Art Theatre made a visit during the summer to the University of Minnesota to present Sudermann's *Fires of St. John.* That University itself presented a very unusual production of the opera *Martha* in silhouette and pantomime under the direc-

tion of Lester Raines. Mr. Raines directed *The Cassilis Engagement* by St. John Hankin for the Delight-makers of the New Mexico Normal University before leaving for Minnesota to undertake the *Martha* production.

Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré of New Orleans gave over its main theatre to its workshop playwrights and players in July for an evening of original work. The directors of the New Orleans theatre have been very busy this summer preparing for the winter season. They plan a program of eight plays and there will be a new director for every two productions. Lemist Esler, who, it will be remembered, tried out *Death Takes a Holiday* for the Shuberts at Stony Creek, Connecticut, will be in charge of the first two performances. One of these is a new play *Six Is Company,* the work of Eleanor Carroll Chilton and Herbert Agar. It is being tried out for Otis Chatfield-Taylor, a new Broadway producer.

Such enthusiasm in the theatre out of season must be taken as the index of a very healthy condition. The summer theatre apparently has nothing to fear from the talking motion pictures (which, as a rule, are easily accessible) nor from other types of summer amusement. It provides not only entertainment for a vast audience of vacationers, but also training for young actors and the opportunity for experimental work prior to the Broadway season.

Minnesota University production of Martha *in silhouette and pantomime.*

FEATHER PICTURES OF THE COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE

By Gerhard R. Lomer

IN the Library of McGill University in Montreal, are about ten unique and hitherto unpublished pictures illustrating stage costumes at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries. They are contemporary with Shakespeare but they have nothing to do with the English drama, for they come from Italy and they represent characters from the widely popular comedy of the day, the Commedia dell' Arte. Moreover, these pictures are unique as well as contemporary, for they are made entirely out of the feathers of birds chosen with such care and laid down with such skill that they produce the effect of a painting.

The dramatic pictures that survive in this unique collection of illustrations form part of a gigantic folio which the librarian found and purchased in London a few years ago. It was apparently completed in 1618 by Dionysius Minaggio, gardener to the Governor of Milan, after what must have been years of patient and devoted labor. The volume contained 156 leaves of pictures made entirely of feathers, carefully chosen for size and color and pasted upon paper which was then mounted upon the leaves of the stout leather-bound volume. Of these 116 are of birds and are chiefly of ornithological interest, as they are probably the oldest examples of bird skins now in existence; several represent musicians and scenes of contemporary life such as hunting and fishing, hawking, netting, shoe-making, knife-grinding, and even tooth-pulling! Nine leaves contain

the pictures that are of immediate interest to us and represent the following characters: Leander, Trapolino and Baltram, Cietrulo and Bagatino, Policianelo, Mario and Flavia, Florinda, Pombino, Chocholi, and Schapin and Spineta. These characters all go back to the fertile fields of Italy for their origin, for they were born in the cradle of the Campagna and inherited something of the tradition of ancient comedy with which they united a new vigor drawn from the life of the people, "the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker." New inspiration was added by various cities in the development of characters. Bologna gave us the ignorant and pedantic Doctor; Milan supplied the characters Beltrame and Scapin; Venice, the home of adventurers and merchants, contributed the Captain and Pantaloon; Bergamo was responsible for Harlequin and Brighella; Naples gave Scaramouche and Tartaglia; and Rome, Turin, and other cities contributed their share.

The Commedia dell' Arte flourished in the 16th century in Italy, whence it spread through France, Spain, and Germany. Like most comedy, its origins were humble, as it is at first related to the public performances given by acrobats, mountebanks, and those who perform at fairs or in squares; yet it felt the uplifting influence of the Renaissance and reached its height about the time when Shakespeare was born.

The actors were highly specialized into types, for the characters they played persisted through the different comedies, so that one could see, in different places and at various times, a number of episodes in the lives of Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon, Polichinelle, Doctor Gratiano, Captain Spavento, and their fellows. These characters still live in their modern prototypes in stage comedy. The buffoon, the bragging soldier, the in-

satiable lover, the quack doctor, the fool, the country clown, the dupe—all these abound in the popular comedy of all countries.

Upon the basis of an outline of the action, the actors improvised not only the details of their acting, much as a modern film-actor would, but also the words, being trained to do so by long and arduous intellectual and theatrical practice. This art was not entirely spontaneous. The actors had, by long training and hard study, accumulated a store of speeches, selections appropriate to an occasion, declarations of love, and so forth, and declaimed them at the proper moment just as the old-fashioned movie piano player would play *Hearts and Flowers* or *The Wedding March.*

If a dialogue lagged or a monologue became tiresome, it was eked out with traditional comic gestures, postures, or acrobatic stunts.

Owing to the conditions of this comedy where coöperation and a knowledge of one's fellow-actor's capabilities counted for so much, permanent companies were formed, and often a character was handed down in a family from father to son. Intermarriages frequently took place, especially in itinerant companies. These companies for various reasons did not forever remain in one place; sometimes the town was not large enough to support them; sometimes they incurred the displeasure of the authorities; now and then the Church objected to their plays. At first the life of these wandering players had in it some of the colour and variety and uncertainty of the lives of the mountebanks, charlatans, jugglers, wrestlers, acrobats, and clowns who appeared at fairs and local feasts. Their worldly theatrical goods consisted of an ox-cart or a waggon packed with curtains, back-drops, costumes, properties, and even members of their company.

The French writer, Paul Scarron, gives an amusing description of one

such troupe on its way: "Twelve people, half actors and half actresses, a prompter, a scene shifter, a wardrobe keeper, eight servants, four maids, nurses, children of all ages, dogs, cats, monkeys, parrots, birds, pigeons, and a lamb—it was a veritable Noah's Ark! Picture to yourself such a company arriving at a tavern in the evening, footsore and weary, hungry and thirsty, after a long day's tramp on dusty roads. The horses snort with anticipation of their evening feed; the white and dusty sides of the oxen heave slowly as they come to a welcome stop. Out of the waggon jump the actresses, the servants, the children. The birds sing or squawk or peep. The cats stretch lazily and the inquisitive dogs, with furtive footsteps and interrogatory nostrils, explore their new quarters. Out come the jovial tavern-keeper, his buxom wife, and motley staff. The jumbled clatter of human tongues, penetrating as theatrical voices so often are, arises under the fading green of the evening sky, welcome, banter, cries for immediate drink to wash down the filthy dust, shrill and iterated demands for food from hungry children, and behind all and filling in all gaps of sound, all rests in this polyphonic medley, are the rustle and noise of unloading. Out come lights as the dusk falls; food and drink and fodder lull the clatter of tongues; and so the company betake themselves to bed or straw, until the morrow wakens them to a new day."

During the first quarter of the 17th century, which is the time from which the feather pictures date, several troupes playing the Commedia dell' Arte were in existence, among them the "Accesi" of which Tristano Martinelli was the chief figure and the Duke of Mantua the patron; "I Uniti" at Genoa in 1614; the "Comici Fedeli" at Mantua in 1608 and at Paris five years later; and "I Confidenti" at Venice in 1618.

BRAWNY WYCHERLEY

Brawny Wycherley, First Master of English Modern Comedy, by Willard Connely. Scribner: N. Y. $3.00.

THE Restoration playwrights have a fascination all their own. Their plays may be forgotten, their wit outmoded, but their names alone evoke a world of elegance, of fashion and of gentlemanly debauchery which has been the delight and the release of many a suppressed generation since their day. William Wycherley, the "Brawny Wycherley" of Willard Connely's lively biography, is one of the most fascinating of the small group of founders of the comedy of manners. His plays with those of Etherege and Congreve represent English comedy at its high water mark. As a leader of a great tradition he is more than entitled to the careful and at the same time sympathetic and readable biography which Mr. Connely has devoted to him.

Wycherley is remembered today for two out of the scant four plays which were his whole dramatic output. The comedy of manners is unique in being the creation of what can only be described as a group of brilliant amateurs, gentleman-scribblers who tossed off a play or two in their moments of idleness, or while recovering from a fit of the gout, and yet succeeded in setting a style in play-writing for lesser men to imitate. Sedley indicated the way with his *Mulberry Garden,* which was his only important venture in comedy. Etherege crystalized the style in *The Man of Mode,* or *Sir Fopling Flutter,* writing only two other plays and then finding the effort of composition too tedious. Rochester toyed with *The Rehearsal* for years and wrote nothing else. Wycherley himself adopted the same condescending attitude toward stagecraft. He is supposed to have taken only three weeks to write his masterpiece, *The Plain Dealer,* and hotly denied Rochester's statement that he was a careful and painstaking writer. After the huge success of this play he refused to tamper further with his well-earned laurels by writing any more plays.

By what magic formula did these idle gentlemen of the Restoration succeed in writing dramatic masterpieces without the assistance of those years of apprenticeship which precept and experience would have us believe are necessary to the achievement of any work of permanent artistic value? The very form and flavor of Wycherley's comedy lies in the answer. Borrowing something of stagecraft and something of plot from his literary predecessors in France and elsewhere, he built the body of his play from the scene around him. He made his characters speak the language of the day, sparkle with his own and his friend's brilliance, walk and talk, eat, drink and make love in the way, and in the very scenes, which London knew. Leaning heavily on formulas borrowed from Terence and Molière, from Spanish and Italian sources, he yet succeeded in creating living beings of his own: Manly the Misanthrope, Sparkish the ever derided and ever present "town fop", the litigious Mrs. Blackacre, Horner, coldly checking off his endless conquests—caricatures, to be sure, but caricatures drawn from life and thrown so vividly on the scene that they have lived for years in the theatre and remain alive even today on the printed page.

Wycherley's plays are so much the product of his day and age that such a biography as Mr. Connely's, redolent of the period as well as accurate in the details of his hero's life, is invaluable. To enjoy Wycherley's

plays we must know his London, the London of 1660 that rioted with joy over the return of the Black Boy from exile in France, the London where Charles II's mistresses throned it at Whitehall and the "confident young men" of his train drank, gambled and made love with equal gusto and violence. Mr. Connely enjoys his period and gives us its full, rich flavor. He finds it, as did one of Wycherley's young ladies, "A pleasant, well-bred, complaisant, free, frolic, good-natured age." He guides us through it with evident enthusiasm, reminding us of some familiar and many unfamiliar aspects of a complex and vividly interesting epoch and shows us Will Wycherley in all his phases, from his early years in France, sitting at the feet of Julie D'Angennes and imbibing the precepts of the Précieuses, to his unlovely but infinitely pathetic old age. Wycherley, unlike his boon companions Sedley and Rochester, was not of noble birth, but his education, his talents, his splendid physique and his amiable disposition quickly won him the friendship of these lordly rakes. With the success of his first play, *Love in a Wood,* Whitehall, in the person of the King's arrogant mistress, Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, smiled upon him. Intermittently replacing the King in that fiery Lady's amorous attentions, he joined the golden circle that surrounded the monarch, and walked, handsome, good natured and invulnerable, through an incredible world of debauchery and intrigue. His life was a series of adventures more contradictory and unbelievable than anything in his plays. Loud advocate of freedom in love and a professional scorner of matrimony, he married a shrew and allowed her to separate him from his king and his friends. Virile, independent and masterful, he yet remained all his active life in irritating tutelage to a narrow minded father. Himself an "old Lion of Satire," he fell victim in the end to the bitterest satirist of the age that succeeded his—to that "little Aesopic sort of animal," Alexander Pope, whom he had befriended and set on the path to success. Only five years of his long life were devoted to writing for the theatre, yet it is for *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer* that Wycherley lives today. These two plays were produced in 1675 and 1677 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, with excellent casts and immediate success and were constantly revived throughout the century. Though their author benefited not at all by these revivals, his fame was kept alive during his lifetime and long after. Today his plays still ring with his robust and untrammelled wit. Read, with this life by Mr. Connely in hand, they recreate vividly the time and temper of one of the most stimulating and diverting periods in English literature. Mr. Connely's book, with its index and bibliography and the scholarly care behind its easy narrative is as valuable to the student as it is engaging to the general reader. ROSAMOND GILDER

ROMANTICISM

Victor Hugo, by Raymond Escholier, translated by Lewis Galantiere. Payson and Clarke (Brewer and Warren): New York. $5.00. Les Premieres de Victor Hugo, by Henry Lyonnet. Delegrave: Paris.

FEBRUARY 25, 1830, is a memorable date in the history of the theatre. So memorable that its centenary has been hailed this year all over the world with reminiscent ardour and amusement. On that day the Romantic movement fought and won its decisive battle. The field of honor was the Comédie Française, the cause of the dispute, Victor Hugo's *Hernani.* The play, which seems to us today harmless and perhaps even a little absurd, fired Paris to a frenzy of excitement. Hugo's friends and followers crowded the theatre, his enemies turned out in equal force. Insults, shrieks, catcalls, hisses and cabbages flew through the air, but in the end the youthful band of romantics, in their sombreros and cloaks, their pink waistcoats and long hair, won the day. Hugo and *Hernani* triumphed and classicism as represented by French tragedy received what seemed a mortal blow. The theatre counted in those days, counted almost to the point of bloodshed and insurrection. It was less than fifty years since an equally spectacular première, that of Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro,* had started the wheels of Revolution spinning to disaster. *Hernani* also precipitated a revolt, but this time it was a peaceful revolution of literary and artistic ideals.

Raymond Escholier's life of the great leader of the Romantic movement is in itself

a triumph of romanticism. The learned curator of the Musée Victor Hugo on the Place des Vosges has let himself be carried away on a lyric flight in his life of the hero whom he ranks with Napoleon and the Unknown Soldier as the greatest glory of France. "As a novelist respectful of life," he tells us in his preface to the French edition of his book, "I have not dreamed of writing a novelized biography of Victor Hugo. . . . The story of Victor Hugo is a novel actually lived." Unfortunately M. Escholier has seen fit to embellish that story with poetic fancies, imaginary conversations and bursts of breathless adulation that give it all the appearance of a novelized biography even though we accept the author's assurance that every statement is based on recorded fact. M. Escholier is fully equipped to write an interesting and authoritative life of Hugo. A vast amount of material on the subject is available, and he has had, in addition, access to as yet unpublished sources of great importance. His position as curator of the Hugo Museum and his years of research into every phase of Hugo's life vouch for his thorough knowledge of his subject. It is all the more to be regretted that he has not given us a more vivid sense of the author and his times.

But Victor Hugo's career and personality are so charged with drama, passion, politics and contradictions that any telling of them proves absorbing. His connection with the theatre was only one incident in a crowded life and he will probably be remembered as the author of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables* long after *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas* are forgotten, but he made an ineffaceable impression on the stage of his time and it was as a dramatist that he won his first laurels. An unacted play—or rather, the preface to an unacted and unactable play called *Cromwell* put him at the head of the growing band of young men whom we now call the Romantics. "Let us take the hammer to poetic systems!" exclaimed the young Hugo of the flashing black eyes and high white forehead to the selected band of painters, playwrights, poets and lovely women who had gathered in Nodier's salon to hear him read his preface: "Let us smash into bits all theories, prosodies and systems. Let us tear down this old plaster which covers the façade of art. There are neither rules nor models! . . ." Hugo's first play, *Amy Robsart,* with costumes by the great painter Delacroix, was labelled a "barbaric nonsensical - romantico" concoction and hissed off the stage of the Odéon in 1827. Shortly after, stirred to emulation by Dumas-père's success with *Henry III,* he wrote *Marion de Lorme* in one month. But Charles X, on his precarious throne, would not authorize its production and it had to wait a change of government and the success of *Hernani* to see the light. *Le Roi S'Amuse* followed in 1832 and once again the cohorts of romanticism rallied to the attack, but this time their efforts were in vain. The play was received stormily by the public on its first night and banned by the government the following day. Hugo lived to see it revived half a century later when the Comédie mounted it once again, this time with great pomp and splendour, and played it successfully to a Parisian audience which had forgotten the quarrels of 1830 and was ready to applaud and love its grand old man. The failure of *Le Roi S'Amuse* did not discourage Hugo. *Lucréce Borgia* and *Marie Tudor* followed in rapid succession. Both were given at the Port-Saint-Martin in 1833 and though written in prose, to the distress of Hugo's followers, achieved immediate success. They were historical, imaginative dramas of the deepest romantic dyè, as was also *Angelo,* given at the Théâtre Français in 1835. Victor Hugo's greatest triumph, however, was reserved for *Ruy Blas,* produced in 1838. Here, once again, Hugo returns to his verse, exalting in heroic terms the valet who dared to love a Queen—the noble suffering and heroic soul of man. *Les Burgraves,* a weighty trilogy in verse produced in 1843, was Victor Hugo's last play. His career as a dramatist was finished. He turned his effort to other fields, to politics, authorship, the Academy, the peerage, dreams of glory ending in battle on the barricades of Paris and long years of exile in Guernsey. The tale is familiar but always absorbing, not least of all the astonishing love story that runs through it all—the double devotion of two women, the poet's wife Adèle and his mistress Juliette Drouet. M. Escholier does full justice to the greatest of the Romantics, but for all his efforts fails to make him entirely convincing or ad-

mirable in the eyes of a more sceptical generation.

The small and unpretentious volume just published (in French) by M. Henry Lyonnet, is well worth reading in connection with M. Escholier's more flamboyant effort. In *Les Premières de Victor Hugo* by this well known historian of the French theatre, we can attend the opening night of each of Hugo's plays. We can sit with the Romantics at *Hernani,* dip into the diary of one of the actors who played on that famous night, Johanny, the only player who was in sympathy with the poet. We can follow the tell-tale course of box office receipts, study the original casts and read the criticisms in the newspapers on the days following each première. M. Lyonnet's accounts are amusingly written and full of nuggets of information concerning Hugo's theatrical career. It will be found of real value to every student of the theatre, and to teachers and producers who touch upon this particular period in theatric history.

Mrs. Grundy, A History of Four Centuries of Morals, intended to illuminate present problems in Great Britain and the United States, by Leo Markun. D. Appleton: N. Y. $5.00.

"WHAT monstrous days are these!" exclaimed Middleton in 1607, and the words might be taken as Mrs. Grundy's perpetual cry. That worthy lady, actually a minor character in a forgotten nineteenth century play, is symbolically a very important personage indeed. She is public opinion in black bombazine. She is that half of humanity which forever "views with alarm" not only the shocking conduct of the other half, but its own inherently devilish impulses as well. Supplementing Moses and, like that distinguished pedagogue, quoting God as the authority, Mrs. Grundy has ever attempted to regulate her neighbor's conduct and keep a naturally undisciplined humanity in order.

In his fat volume devoted to her recent history, Mr. Leo Markun has made a rapid survey of four centuries of manners and morals. His book is largely devoted to the social history of England and America and deals with the struggles between Protestant and Catholic, between Puritan and Cavalier, between good morals and good times. Fashions in morals change as rapidly as fashions in clothes and with apparently as little provocation, yet in the crowded pages of this book a rhythm of action and re-action can be readily traced. Elizabethan liberty harbored in its bosom the seeds of Puritan reform. The harsh repressions of the Roundheads prepared the soil for the flaunting vices of the Restoration. Victoria was born to an England weary of Regency follies. America has known the same alterations of mood though they have been less spectacular. But whatever the rule may be, Mrs. Grundy is never entirely absent, even from the most riotous scene. She is on the watch and she receives her due share of verbal homage even though her precepts may be disregarded and mocked.

Mr. Markun has packed an enormous amount of information into his 650 closely written pages. He is a tolerant historian of human frailties and contents himself with making his record, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions. He has derived much of his material from contemporary sources—diaries, journals, newspapers, the poetry and literature of the day. Written without affectation and from the most liberal point of view, his book is invaluable as a summary of social customs and prejudices. Through its pages we can chart the vagaries of prejudice and form an idea of the roots and backgrounds of our own taboos and inhibitions. "Mrs. Grundy's outlook," Mr. Markun tells us, "is by no means the same in all places and at all times. In fact there is not a single definite rule for moral conduct that has always and everywhere prevailed among men." The theatre has been greatly influenced by these vagaries of custom and prejudice and its history is illuminated by this study. Here in a chapter the reader can find a brief record of the background against which Shakespeare wrote and played; he can see London under the Puritans, and the court under the restored Stuarts; he can follow the movement of the times and watch the theatre in its relation to the whole social development of England and the United States. The book is greatly enlivened by its many illustrations, and its index makes available a mass of illuminating fact.

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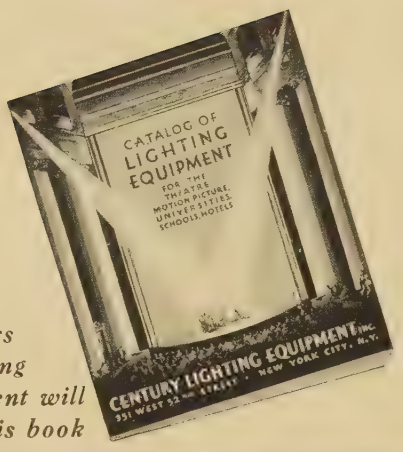
A scene from the Seattle Repertory Playhouse's production of Pirandello's play, directed by Mr. and Mrs. Burton James. (*Photograph by Kunishige*)



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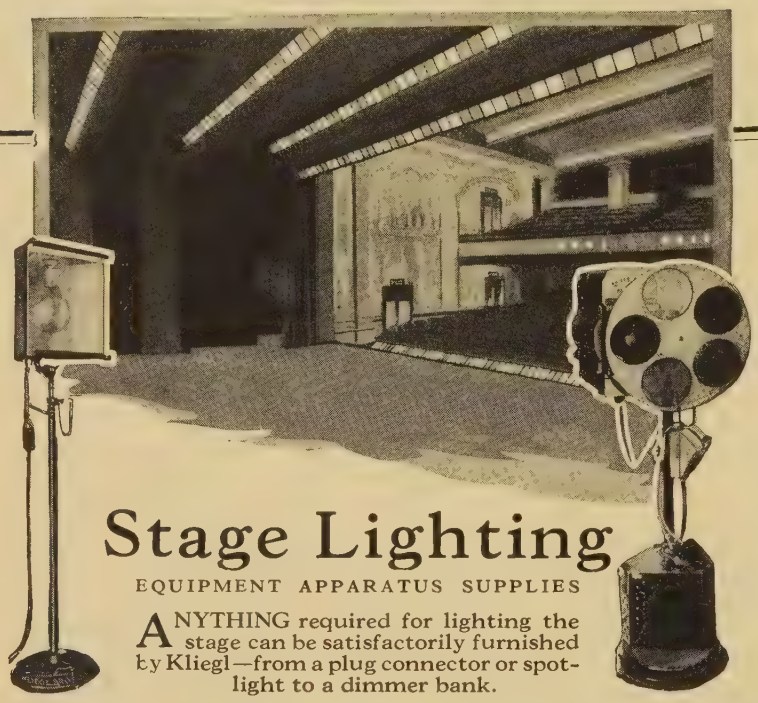

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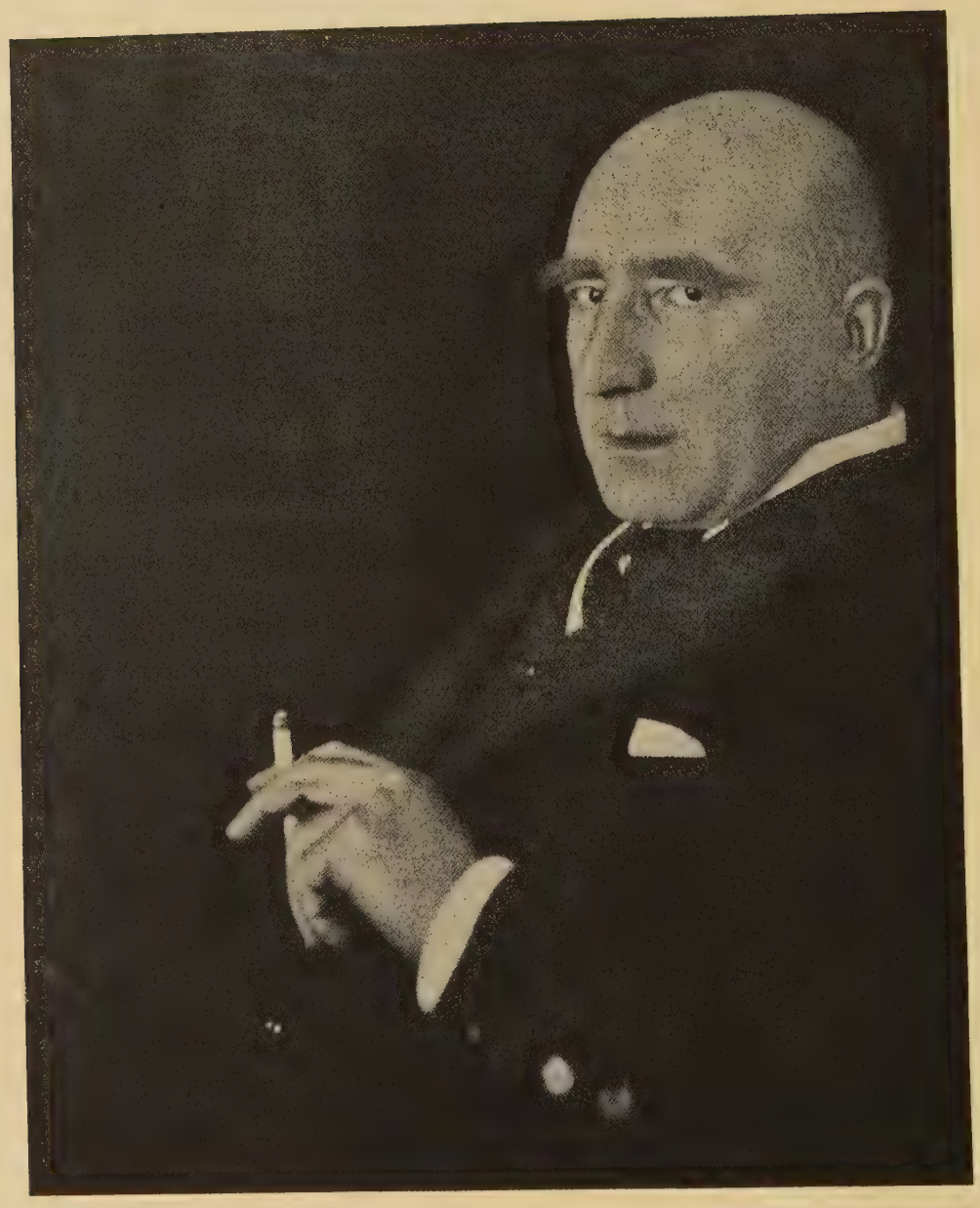

Sir Arthur Wing Pinero

The WORLD and the THEATRE

Sir Arthur Wing Pinero — The American Playgoer at the European Festivals

SIR ARTHUR WING PINERO is the figure who ties the living theatre of our day most closely to its past. His latest play, *Dr. Harmer's Holidays,* is on the program of the Dramatic League this season. Macmillan has on the new list a volume titled *Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's Plays and Players* by Hamilton Fyfe. Obviously, Pinero belongs to our own time, and yet he comes to us vigorously out of the portraits of even so old a year as 1880.

Gordon Craig, in his biography of Henry Irving (of which we print a chapter in this issue) has a paragraph which runs like this: "But besides the celebrated and the important, there was the Irving body-guard—the table-legs—call them what you will—and though Ellen Terry was celebrated and a genius, I know that she prefers to be in this group—so I place her there. With her is Sir Arthur Wing Pinero—as loyal to Irving as to his group, and unique, since on leaving his training-ground, the Lyceum (1877 to 1881), he before long became the foremost dramatist of Great Britain." And Granville-Barker in *The Coming of Ibsen* (also in this issue)

Peasant Girl *by Sidney Feld*

Are D'Oyly Carte's famous Company actually coming to New York with their pockets full of Gilbert and Sullivan when they finish their Canadian season? A theatrical journal says so and the news is too good not to repeat, even on a chance.

•

A summer visitor in Buenos Ayres might have seen three of Eugene O'Neill's dramas. A Russian company produced *All God's Chillun Got Wings* under the title of *The Negro,* and *Desire Under the Elms* as *Love under the Alamos.* Also a Spanish company presented *Anna Christie.*

The good fortune that brought all the material about Irving and Pinero and other figures of one of the most vigorous periods in English theatre history to the editorial desk at one time, by an amusing chance brought also a page from *Vanity Fair* [London] of the same day, giving a contemporary critic's account of what he thought of the plays in the London theatre just fifty years ago. Directly above the play list (reproduced here) were these notes about certain magazines of the day, suggesting that not only playwrights and actors but authors and editors remain much the same from generation to generation: "The *Theatre* [but for the grace of God this might have been a longer name] is well edited. If a few of the writers could write (and if the editor could edit) it might be an admirably successful magazine. At present the staff know plenty about technique but not a man of them can use the English language. Much punning and blank verse hath been the spoil of them.

"The *Antiquary* is a good magazine. It bids fair to rival the *Times* as a purveyor of ancient information.

"*Time* is pleasantly put together. A little touch of amateurism might be dispensed with.

"The *Atlantic Monthly* is better than even *Fraser*".

●

The taste and enterprise of the Canadian Pacific Railway in arranging Festivals of French-Canadian Life and Art has evidently been well rewarded, for a new Festival is announced at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec, October 16, 17, and 18. Besides the usual exhibits, folksongs and dances, two ballad operas will be presented. The first of these, *A French-Canadian Wedding,* by Alberic Bourgeois depicts the celebration attendant upon a marriage ceremony in rural Quebec a hundred years ago. The second, *L'Ordre de Bon Temps,* by Louvigny de Montigny, is derived from the diary of Marc Lescarbot and gives a picture of social life in quotes Archer in 1882: "Arthur Pinero is a beginner with a lot to learn", but by 1886 Pinero has become to Archer "the most original and remarkable of living English playwrights with the possible exception of Mr. Gilbert".

VANITY FAIR. MARCH 13, 1880.

PLAYS TO SEE, AND OTHERS.

PRINCE OF WALES'S.—"Forget-Me-Not." Strong, vigorous modern play—a success. Miss Ward and Mr. Clayton in two strong parts.

ADELPHI.—"Ninon." Poetical and passionate melodrama by W. G. Wills.

LYCEUM.—"The Merchant of Venice." Distinctly Henry Irving's finest Shakespearian character. Portia triumphantly surviving the Blackwood critic, and winning sympathy and sonnets from all young London. With two exceptions the rest of the cast very feeble indeed.

PRINCESS'S.—"The Streets of London." Boucicault's adaptation of "Les "Pauvres de Paris."

ST. JAMES'S.—"Old Cronies." A Pretty dialogue "The Queen's Shilling." A bad play well acted; pretty pictures to see in the Entr'acte.

OLYMPIC.—"Red Tape." Byronesque drama. "Heir at Law." Fine old English comedy.

GAIETY.—"Blow for Blow." Byronesque drama again. "Robbing "Roy." Fine old Gaiety burlesque.

STRAND.—"Madame Favart." Opera comique, with a suggestion of pathos. A success.

COURT.—"The Old Love and the New." Melodramatic comedy. A good strong play.

ROYALTY.—"Jo." "Bleak House" excellently dramatised. A touching study of a weeping waif.

ALHAMBRA.—"Rothomago." Glitter and gorgeousness, and three excellent ballets.

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FOLLY.—"The Spitalfields Weaver," and "Bardell v. Pickwick." Mr. Toole as amusing as ever.

IMPERIAL.—"As You Like It," at 3 p.m. A very perfect presentation. A forest idyl for an idle afternoon.

GERMAN REED'S.—"Castle Botherem." An Irish eccentricity. Much musical fun.

VAUDEVILLE.—"School for Scandal." Classic comedy played with all the traditions of the piece.

HAYMARKET.—"Money." Criticisms various, but should be seen of course. The house exceedingly comfortable.

GLOBE.—The "Cloches de Corneville" ringing their last changes.

RIP.

Plays current while Pinero was an actor in Irving's Company.

FESTIVALS all over Europe. Travellers from all over the world making their way across Europe, and especially, this Summer, across Germany, to meet at those Festivals. Most of them not what are technically known as tourists—although the "personally conducted" poured in by the thousands upon Oberammergau and Salzburg.

And, contrary to tradition, not all Americans by any means. The woman who travelled three days and three nights from a far corner of Hungary to see a single performance of *Tristan* under Toscanini's baton at Bayreuth, was only one of the world's multitude who love good music and drama enough to go far across the world to find it.

The wonder of these German Festivals is that they keep faith so well with the public. Even Siegfried Wagner's fatal illness was not allowed to dull the edge of this Summer's performances at Bayreuth. You could not see a better actor-singer than Wilhelm Rode as Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* at the Prinz Regenten in Munich, nor watch a more satisfying ensemble in *Don Giovanni* than at the lovely Residenztheater.

And who were the audience? Queens and ex-queens from the Balkans, crown princesses from the south, the great soprano, the great violinist, the richest iron-master, the countess with the most brilliant jewels in Germany, the lady with the newest Patou gown, the little boy who for a year had been paying for his seats by installments from his weekly wages. The celebrities would be pointed out as the eager crowds followed them around, in those long, refreshing intermissions between the acts. But who else? Who were the masses? If you were an American and interested in knowing what kind of Americans wanted this sort of thing, your record might be like this: Adolfo Betti of the Flonzaley, then the two hustling little critics of the hustling big papers. Next to you sat the

the settlement of Port Royal under Champlain three hundred years ago. Robert Choquette, a French-Canadian poet, has made a revised French version of the opera and it will be presented by a cast selected from *La Société d'Operette* of Montreal under the direction of M. H. Vaillancourt.

•

Pirandello, four of whose plays are announced for American production this year, is in every branch of the news. He is reported to have written a radio play, *The Man of Flowers,* especially for the British Broadcasting Company and to be at work on a new play called *Adam and Eve* in which the hero and heroine are not the original first settlers, but the last man and woman left in the world after the great cataclysm. He has, moreover, contributed a characteristically strange and interesting play called *Dream (but perhaps not)* to *This Quarter,* a magazine printed in English and published by Edward W. Titus in Paris. The same issue of *This Quarter* contains a miniature anthology of contemporary Italian literature, edited by Samuel Putnam who translates the Pirandello play, which makes the number not only well worth reading, but worth keeping on the shelf for reference.

•

The Malvern Festival inaugurated successfully last year under the direction of Sir Barrie Jackson seems, at the end of its second season, well on the way to permanence. England in the summer is a perfect setting for drama and the Malvern hills are an inspiration to the festival mood. Organized partly as a tribute to Bernard Shaw, whose plays form its major contribution, the program would be entirely justified, visitors say, if it had contained nothing this year other than the superb performance of *Widowers' Houses,* one of the least-played of Shaw's works. The 1930 Festival also featured Rudolf Besier's new play, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* which is being talked of as a vehicle for Katharine Cornell.

New York is to have its share of Hungarian theatre this season. Not only are there to be more than the usual English adaptations of Hungarian plays, but three Hungarian companies already have productions in rehearsal. The Hungarian Kamara Company, which is planning to produce six plays at the Longacre, the Hungarian Operetta Company and the New York Hungarian Players have all begun work.

•

Material advance in the cause of protecting artistic and scientific treasures in time of war is indicated by the announcement that the International Commission of Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations, in session at Geneva, completely indorsed the "Roerich pact", which provides for the creation of a flag to be raised above museums, cathedrals, libraries and other cultural centers, to insure them against attack.

•

One more note on Bayreuth. Rudolph von Laban, leader of the revolution in the modern dance in Germany, designed the ballet for the production of *Tannhäuser*. A Wagner fan, to whom the name of Laban meant nothing, was asked how he liked the ballet and answered, "The best I have ever seen. I think it was exactly as Wagner would have wished it." A fine achievement by Laban to be able to adapt his material that way, even though it raises the question of how far away from the straight line of the past the revolution has actually carried the modern dance. The Dance Congress in Munich held earlier in the Summer seems to have raised this question vigorously. The Berlin *Illustrierte Zeitung* says of it: "The oldest of the arts is today again the most modern, followed and fought over with passion. And the less one school differs from the other, the more they argue and disapprove. It would be a difficult task to bring together in any peaceful spirit all of these fighting friends of the dance."

teacher of voice at Curtis Institute. On the other side, the mother of a well-known publisher with the wife of a distinguished surgeon. In front of you the author of two Broadway successes, with his wife. Near them a stock-broker with a literary tradition. A young lawyer and his wife; a middle-aged lawyer and his daughters. The president of a great charitable organization with his son. One of the best known stock-market reporters, who dashed over the border from Czechoslovakia to be on time and who must speed his motor to get back across the border before midnight. And so on, and on. But this night may, of course, be an exception. Perhaps all of these Americans who love fine theatre are gathered here by accident.

Then try again at a Mozart opera in Munich the week after. The playwright and his wife are there again, and another young playwright with a friend. A young man just out of Harvard; a young man just out of Yale. In a box at the right is a Fifth Avenue dealer in fine prints, and directly across from him New York's most enthusiastic specialist in modern art. A third art dealer, the youngest in the line, is in the orchestra with a painter from Chicago, and a budding business man from Indiana.

Here they are, all of the people whom one misses on Broadway—paying well for their seats, arriving on time, enjoying the performance to the full. Because it is a novelty? Perhaps. Because they are on holiday? Perhaps. But is it not more likely to be because they are getting what this public wants?

A performance of *Jedermann* in front of the Cathedral at Salzburg, under the direction of Max Reinhardt. The Salzburg Festival, the Mozart and Wagner festival at Munich, the Wagner festival at Bayreuth, and the decennial performance of the Passion Play at Oberammergau turned a hundred thousand visitors to Germany and Austria last summer. (*Photograph by Ellinger, Salzburg*)

Madame Povla Frijsh, Danish dramatic soprano well known to American concert audiences, appeared last fall as guest artist at the Royal Danish Opera at Copenhagen where she sang the part of Lady Ingeborg in *King and Earl* by Peter Heise, a work based on a tale by Christian Richardt. (*Photographs by Elfelt*)

Madame Povla Frijsh as the saddened Lady Ingeborg in the third act of Peter Heise's opera. Few actors have the power which Madame Frijsh adds to her rare gift for dramatic song, that of creating and revealing character, mood, temperament, through movement and expression.

ARDVORLICH'S WIFE

Gordon Bottomley's stylized one-act poetic drama, (announced by the New York Civic Repertory Theatre as a prelude to Mr. Bottomley's longer play, *Gruach*), as it was performed in John Masefield's theatre near Oxford. In the place of scenery a snow-covered glen among the Scottish mountains was indicated by a snow-clad chorus, interlacing as a dancing snow-storm does, and giving a voice by strophe and antistrophe to the lonely spirit of the place. (*Photograph by Pollard Crowther*)

CURTAIN GOING UP

Broadway in Prospect

By JOHN HUTCHENS

IT IS a fretful and of course persistent paradox that comes anew to the New York theatre each September with another golden forecast. It was scarcely three months ago that a season ended amid copy-book figures telling an old story of occasional success and much more frequent failure, a season whose lessons were as plain as only sad statistics could make them. That unhappy box-score was followed by the leanest Summer in Broadway's history, when at one time only twelve attractions remained open. Soon there will be approximately two hundred and fifty more productions, of which one hundred and fifty will be new, non-musical events; of the total, perhaps forty will bring a worthy return, financially or artistically or both—for to just such a large proportion of unbalanced promoters does the theatre remain a place for incessant gambling. No matter. Facing a Broadway which is ten months long, from September through June, and at least as wide as the threescore legitimate playhouses that border it, another theatrical year is poised at the start of its uneven, always exciting race.

Not that the Spring and Summer have been without their salutary developments. The League of New York Theatres, designed to crush ticket speculation and clear the way to box-offices for a discouraged public, has been organized and at this writing hangs in the balance awaiting the test of crowded houses. The Summer stock theatres have increased significantly in number, ambition and scope. Nevertheless, the season's curtain call finds the general situation much as it has always been, and pervaded once more by that strange excitement which now, as always, grows out of the uncertainty of large production schedules. Those schedules are resplendent, and one does not take them too seriously. Plays written and, presumably, awaiting only a theatre in which to open will never be seen anywhere; other titles have lingered

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in the lists for years, and works not yet conceived will come to sudden life in the Spring (there was *The Green Pastures,* for instance, all unsuspected until it leaped up last season to become one of the important plays of the decade)....You say that a whole system must be wrong in which there is such a deal more of missing than of hitting. Your supposition is undeniably correct.

But also, unless there is a more than ordinary lack of good faith in the managerial statements, some degree of new steadiness is indicated in the outlook and the realignments of the year that is starting. Economic depression, which finds its way quickly to the theatre, and brings with it a note of well-founded panic, does even more to reduce shoddy, speculative production, and the "angels" will not be quite so quick as they once were to back certain dubious managers. This new and heartening steadiness, though it is not yet strong enough to be an important factor, is manifested by at least two new repertory schedules and one additional subscription plan in New York, by the continuance of the Chicago Civic Theatre and by the growth of the Shubert subscription groups founded last year in Chicago and Philadelphia. There is hope in those signs of a more mature and certain scheme of production than prevails at present.

For those balanced values of good theatre that stem from repertory, one turns again to Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre, which for its fifth season announces five additions to an already imposing selection. The Civic Repertory, always important for its working idealism, arrived so forcefully last season with its production of *Romeo and Juliet* that it has now achieved the eminence of a practical art group, with the advantage of the hard-headed, skilful management that went into its creation. As one wise in the necessities of the theatre, Miss Le Gallienne has developed her acting company quietly and so effectively that one player after another has gained the finish of the good repertory actor. The nucleus of her troupe of the first two years remains: Egon Brecher, Josephine Hutchinson, Harold Moulton, Sayre Crawley, Robert Ross, Alma Kruger, Leona Roberts, Paul Leyssac, Donald Cameron and J. Edward Bromberg. Jacob Ben-Ami, who in his first year with the company revealed again his genius for acting that is reflective and beautifully controlled, will be seen early in the season in the leading role of Jean Giraudoux's *Siegfried.* The four other new productions in Miss Le Gallienne's schedule will

comprise Hjalmar Bergman's *The Nobel Prize,* in a translation by Herman Bernstein; an adaptation by Florida Friebus of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland;* Ibsen's *Rosmersholm,* with Miss Le Gallienne as Rebecca West; and Gordon Bottomley's *Gruach* (preceded by *Ardvorlich's Wife,* as a curtain raiser), in addition to the return of *Three Sisters,* a mainstay of the first season in Fourteenth Street. The policies of four years will continue. As heretofore, no play, however successful, will be presented more than four times a week, and the top price of $1.50 for admission will continue—two items deserving of mention because they have been as important and shrewd as any in a record of keeping faith with the public.

The two managements which have newly decided upon repertory, the Actor-Managers and the firm of Macgowan and Reed, indicate something further of substance. Although final arrangements appear not to have been completed, the former group, in alliance with the Shuberts, plan to sponsor a group of classical plays—*The Way of the World,* the *Medea, All for Love* and *The Critic*—to be staged by Agnes Morgan, perhaps with Laurette Taylor and Maria Germanova in the casts. Ruth Draper, after two phenomenal seasons at the Comedy, will again appear under the management of the Actor-Managers. Macgowan and Reed, whose production of *Children of Darkness* was an insufficiently appreciated event last season, will present a varied offering with *Twelfth Night;* Wilbur Daniel Steele's and Norma Mitchell's *When Hell Froze; The Red General,* from the German of Herman Ungar; Sacha Guitry's *The Fall of Berg-op-Zoom,* adapted by Gilbert Seldes and tried out last Spring by Frederic McConnell at the Cleveland Playhouse; Robert E. Sherwood's *Marching As to War,* and Ronald Jeans' *The Mulberry Bush;* of these plays, *Twelfth Night* and *When Hell Froze,* in both of which Jane Cowl will be starred, will alternate in repertory. For the first time on a subscription basis, Charles Hopkins, always a quiet, distinctive worker within the limits of his small theatre, will offer Benn W. Levy's *Mrs. Moonlight;* a play by A. A Milne; Denys Amiel's *The Image,* and Galsworthy's *The Roof,* given its American première last June by the Yale Dramatic Association....A share of the "road" that is repeatedly said to be dead (as, indeed, it is for bad plays and worse companies) will again be represented by the Dramatic League of Chicago and the Professional Players

in Philadelphia, two organizations whose success was notable in their first season of experimental as well as established plays. Other subscription groups managed by the Shuberts will open this season in Boston, Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh, and the Theatre Guild's road companies will again tour extensively.

II

Though it is dangerous to hazard a guess at the tone of any theatrical season, this incipient one seems—at this distance—to be important for the emphatic role it gives to the American theatre and its workers. Uneven as our playwrights may be in the quality of their work (and that quality was often disappointing last year), they still possess preeminent advantages of vigor and flexibility; and the return of Paul Green, Maxwell Anderson, Laurence Stallings and Kenyon Nicholson adds interest and potential strength to a season which will also find the belated arrival on Broadway of Lynn Riggs, as well as new plays by the recognized craftsmen. The passing of the Provincetown Players left no professional group that may strictly be called experimental; and the apparent dissolution of Leo Bulgakov's troupe, after their excellent productions of *The Sea Gull* and *The Lower Depths,* is a serious loss; also absent is Eugene O'Neill, reported still busy for the Guild upon his "most ambitious effort". Yet the field remains full of interest.

After two seasons, in which its choice of plays has often been shoddy and uncertain, the Theatre Guild will open in mid-October with Mr. Anderson's *Elizabeth the Queen* (with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in the leading roles), will follow with Mr. Riggs' *Green Grow the Lilacs,* and will retain on its list of possible productions Paul Green's *The House of Connelly,* as well as new plays by Dan Totheroh, Claire and Paul Sifton, Margaret Freeman, and Katherine Clugston and Hamilton Crook. Of particular importance is the reentry of Mr. Anderson, at least three of whose plays —*Saturday's Children, What Price Glory* (with Mr. Stallings) and *Gypsy*—revealed qualities of terseness, poetry and the robust, fine way of dramatic simplicity. From the Southwest, with his play for the Guild and *Borned in Texas* for Arthur Hopkins, has come Mr. Riggs; and though the nature of the plays has not been made public, their promise lies in the dramatic use of the native idiom and the rich, autochthonous folk-lore of places not yet ex-

plored by their country's theatre. Again, the Guild will be going back to an old part of its duty to the American theatre if, in endowing the Paul Green play with its full resources of production, it does justice to an author whose medium of passionate tragedy is equal to O'Neill's and whose use of folk material is lyric and sure. (A second play by Mr. Green, *Potter's Field*—which the author has explained as an attempt to "give an absolutely true picture of the spirit and philosophy of a certain type of Negro life" and which "verges toward a sort of opera"—is announced for production by Sidney Ross.) The foreign program definitely selected by the Guild will choose from such importations as Tretiakow's *Roar China,* Sil-Vara's *The Genius and His Brother,* Schnitzler's *The Lonely Way,* Franz Werfel's *Spiegelmensch,* and *The Good Soldier Schwejk,* from Jaroslav Haschek's novel. . . . For the playing of these and its other dramas, the acting company —somewhat altered—will contain Tom Powers, Earle Larimore, Ernest Cossart, Henry Travers, Morris Carnovsky, Helen Westley, Elizabeth Risdon, Gale Sondergaard and Franchot Tone.

Mr. Stallings, escaped from Hollywood and back in the theatre again for the first time since his collaborations with Mr. Anderson, returns with a dramatization for A. H. Woods of Hemingway's novel, *A Farewell to Arms*—a task which, at the moment, is unrivaled in the advance interest evoked by its problem of capturing the effect of a novel at once so incisive, panoramic and restless. Returning, too, is Kenyon Nicholson, whose carnival play, *The Barker,* contained a promise not fulfilled by two subsequent efforts. . . . His *Torch Song* began the season for Arthur Hopkins, and his *Step-daughters of War* will inaugurate the semi-independent producing career of Chester Erskin, now associated with the office of Charles Frohman, Inc. As an officer of that organization, Mr. Erskin's plans call for four plays on whose construction he will confer, in advance, with the respective playwrights—a striking instance of the growth of the director's theatre.

The plans of only a few other native dramatists have been definitely stated. George S. Kaufman, collaborating this time with Moss Hart, will stage and act in their Hollywood comedy, *Once in a Lifetime,* and on the basis of Mr. Kaufman's past work, as a playwright and director, a fast show, threaded with satirical comment, is in order. Vincent Lawrence, with a gift for fluent dialogue and the overtones of tragi-comedy, is listed as the author of

Washington Heights, for production by William Harris, Jr. The same producer also will offer a new play by the always promising, seldom successful Zoë Akins, and a tragedy by Martin Flavin, whose prison drama, *The Criminal Code,* brought him back last year after a long absence since *Children of the Moon.* . . . George Kelly, Philip Barry, Marc Connelly, Elmer Rice and S. N. Behrman are listed, too, each for one or two plays. Mr. Connelly will stage William Bolitho's posthumous drama, *Overture, 1920.*

The long list continues, and it comprises proved and unproved writers, and again plays whose advance interest is on the side of their producers or players. John Golden will present a rewritten version of *Bon Voyage*, by that astute technician, Rachel Crothers. He will also offer *After Tomorrow,* by himself and Hugh Stange, the latter the author of *Veneer,* a direct and affecting tragedy of last season. Mr. Stange has gone on to write a war play, *The Long Road.* . . . Michael Gold, who, with *Fiesta,* emerged last year from the incoherence of his first work for the theatre, has dramatized his own recent novel, *Jews Without Money.* Jed Harris, his return to the theatre brilliantly established last Spring by his production of *Uncle Vanya,* will continue this month with *Mr. Gilhooley,* a dramatization of the Liam O'Flaherty novel, and is scheduled to follow with an adaptation by Charles MacArthur of Gogol's *The Inspector General.* David Belasco announces an adaptation of Oliver LaFarge's Pulitzer prize novel, *Laughing Boy,* for production shortly after the turn of the year.

III

From the foreign sources which, with a few striking exceptions, so outweighed in importance the native contribution last year, the promises are as usual bright if largely tentative. Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* will be brought back late in the year by Brock Pemberton, and four other Pirandello plays—*Tonight We Improvise, As You Want Me, The Giants of the Mountain* and *When You Are Somebody*—are given a place on the schedule of the Shuberts. The latter, having a great many theatres to fill, will again be the most prolific of local producers, or theatrical realtors, as you will. Under their sponsorship, Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's *Dr. Harmer's Holidays* will arrive early next year; *Napoleon Intervenes,* a fantasy produced last Winter in Berlin, is

due in an adaptation by Elmer Harris; and Ivor Novello, for his debut on the American stage, has come over in his own play, *Symphony in Two Flats.* Charles Dillingham, who has already presented the English war play *Suspense,* announces for a second time Lonsdale's *Canaries Sometimes Sing.* That always interesting and inconsistent veteran, Mr. Woods, promises Henri Bernstein's *Melo,* with Fay Bainter, under the direction of Rouben Mamoulian, and two adaptations from the German, *Poor Little Church Mouse* and *Grand Hotel.* They belong to a list of ten plays of which Mr. Woods ought to put on at least five. Gilbert Miller, in addition to presenting Max Pallenberg and Fritzi Massary in German repertory, will offer an exclusively foreign schedule: Molnar's *One, Two, Three* (adapted by Sidney Howard), with Arthur Byron; Marcel Pagnol's *Marius,* with Alexander Kirkland; Edouard Bourdet's *Le Sexe Faible,* Hans J. Rehfisch's and Wilhelm Herzog's *The Dreyfus Affair,* and Jacques Deval's *Etienne.* Mr. Belasco, whose season started early in August with an adaptation entitled *Dancing Partner,* will follow with Lili Hatvany's *Tonight or Never* before turning to two American plays. Under the classification of things important if true is Sidney Ross' plan to bring over Meyerhold and his company. . . . And then there will be, of course, the customary succession of foreign melodramas, of plays vaguely described as "from the Hungarian", of "sophisticated" comedies, and they will be neither better nor worse than their American counterparts.

IV

If the Broadway scene appears to change only a very little in itself, its players move in a shifting pattern difficult to follow minutely. Few of the actors and actresses who deserve the security of repertory are to be found in it; not many more would make the sacrifice necessary to have it—which, together with the decline of the stock company, accounts for the dangerous lack of new figures trained in a school of versatility. Among the established players, a cursory view finds Miss Cowl turning, happily, from her tepid starring vehicles of the last two seasons to the repertory plays noted above; and Ethel Barrymore, after a long season on the road, will come back to New York in a dramatization of Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*—Miss Barrymore, by her arrange-

ment with the Shuberts, appearing under her own direction. Richard Bennett will return in Lawton Campbell's satire, *Solid South;* Beth Merrill in a play by Patrick Kearney; Otto Kruger, an excellent actor and lately a victim of the here-today-and-gone-tomorrow school of producing, will be seen in Mr. Stange's *The Long Road.* Dudley Digges and Claude Rains are missing from the Guild's roster. . . . The sentimental event of the season will be the return of Maude Adams after her ten years' retirement. Her play will be a fantasy by John Colton, author of such unfantastic dramas as *Rain* and *The Shanghai Gesture.*

Since most discussions of the current stage arrive at mention of the talking pictures, it is indicative that the situation of last Fall, with the screen in the ascendant and the stage fighting to hold its own, is ironically reversed. The golden aura has evidently departed the Hollywood temples where lately it presided with such confidence; and the talking pictures, as this magazine joined in predicting more than a year ago, have had for the theatre only the healthy, purging effect of the silent films of ten or fifteen years ago. A hundred and fifty Broadway players, it is said, who heard that siren call are still on the Pacific Coast. It is a very great pleasure to report that, scan their number as you will, you will find none of them who is really missed by the theatre that trained him.

THE LONDON SCENE

At the End of the Season

By Ashley Dukes

THE fashionable play of the moment, and for months to come, is *Cynara,* by H. M. Harwood and R. Gore Browne —a piece in eleven scenes representing one phase of the struggle between traditional theatre and talking film. It concerns an "affair" of a successful middle-aged lawyer with a young girl, a liaison begun in the absence of the lawyer's wife, to whom he is devoted in his fashion. The relationship ends tragically with the girl's suicide; her lover is censured by a Coroner's Court and disgraced; and he and his wife are left to take up the threads of life together in an enforced social banishment.

A few years ago this tale would certainly have been made into a three-act play, with two or three heavily realistic sets appropriate to the action. Everything would have worked up to a second-act climax in which the lover and his wife learn of the girl's suicide. The short third act would have been divided perhaps into two scenes, one in the Coroner's Court, the other in Capri or some other place to which the more opulent of social outcasts repair. Indispensable to the story would have been an elderly *raisonneur*, dispensing wit and wisdom under a cynical mask. The half-dozen principal characters would have been all that actually appeared on the stage; the others would merely have been mentioned or taken for granted.

But the talking film is here, the theatrical technique is in a state of flux, and now the tale appears in quite a different dramatic form. It begins with a prologue which is supposed to happen after the main events of the play—that is to say the play itself is unfolded as a narrative told by the husband to his wife. There is nothing particularly new in that, indeed there is nothing particularly distinguished in the treatment of *Cynara* as a whole; but it is interesting to see the well-made play actually transforming itself in technique and development, the secondary characters multi-

plying themselves with the aid of vigorous "doubling" by the players, and the narrative taking a shape that is episodic and still firmly knit and dramatically effective. Lightly-built scenes follow one another rapidly—the wife's bedroom as she prepares for a journey, the Soho restaurant where the husband dining casually with a gourmet friend meets casually the girl who is to figure in the tragedy, the Public Baths in a London suburb where she is an entrant in a beauty competition, the girl's flat, a country inn where the liaison is begun, Kensington Gardens as a lovers' meeting-place, the lawyer's house after his wife's return, the Coroner's Court where the girl's suicide is investigated, and so back to the Capri hotel where the tale has been begun.

The play certainly moves in a dramatic sense; and if it does not move emotionally in the same degree, if it lacks real depth and conviction, that is because one of the authors believes in it wholeheartedly, while the other is an adroit craftsman chiefly interested in the witty and cynical possibilities of the theme. Our old friend the *raisonneur* is there, the friend of the family, disbursing his philosophy and his epigrams for all the world like a stage character of 1895; and he gives a curiously old-fashioned wiggy air to the piece, most of all when his wit is sentimentalized and he becomes the reconciler of husband and wife. Against this it must be said that the pair are well-drawn and played with real understanding by Gerald du Maurier and Gladys Cooper, and the girl is as sensitively played by Celia Johnson, so that *Cynara* deserves to produce the effect of serious drama, and certainly deserves to be the chief link, as it is, between the past theatrical season and the next.

At the Arts Theatre towards the end of July was seen *The Macropoulos Secret,* by Karel Kapek, in which Edith Sharpe made a good impression. She will be one of the leading players at the new repertory theatre, the Embassy in South Hampstead, which Alec Rea is establishing with A. R. Whatmore, late of the Hull Repertory, as producing director. The following production at the Arts Theatre was a double bill, *The Devil and the Lady,* which Tennyson wrote at the age of fourteen, and *The Dumb Wife of Cheapside*, from the Rabelaisian tale re-told by several writers, Anatole France among them. The Tennyson play has what may be called a good Shavian theme, for it concerns a necromancer who summons up the Devil to guard his young wife while he himself goes on a journey. The Devil accepts the commission and proves

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

John Gielgud finds diversion between his remarkably good Hamlet and his fall appearance as Hotspur in *Henry the Fourth* (Part One) scheduled for production by the Old Vic Company, by playing John Worthing in Nigel Playfair's ingenious black and white production of Oscar Wilde's farce, *The Importance of Being Earnest,* at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. A scene with Mabel Terry-Lewis as Lady Bracknell. (*Photograph by Pollard Crowther*)

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

The black and white sets for Nigel Playfair's revival of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* are the work of the young designer, Michael Weight. The costumes, also in black and white, are in the fashion of the period of the play's first production. Here are John Gielgud as John Worthing, Iris Baker as The Honorable Gwendolen Fairfax, Heather Angel as Cecily Cardew, and Anthony Ireland as Algernon Moncrieff, in the garden scene. (*Photograph by Pollard Crowther*)

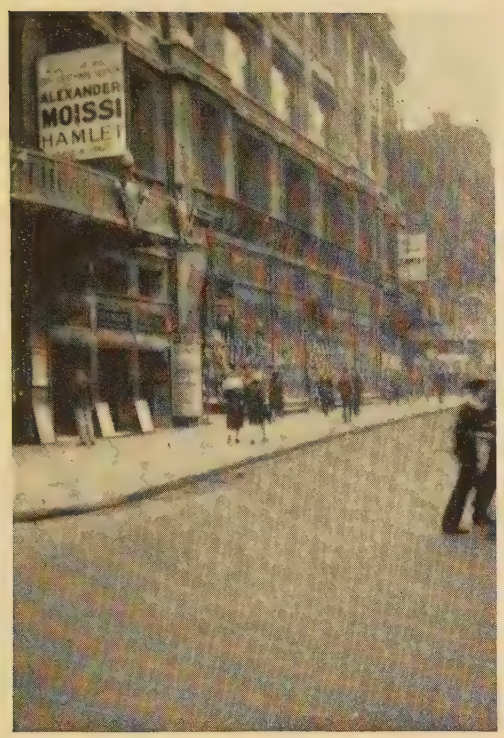
himself a good moralist, for he makes the would-be lovers of the lady one and all ridiculous, and admits them to her house only to cast off his female disguise and leave them terror-stricken. But since he never does what we expect of him, which is to carry off the lady himself, the effect is confusing and inconsequent. Some of the verse is tremendously spirited in its youthful heroic way. As adaptor of the Rabelaisian legend I was indebted to a company of English players who threw themselves into the farce with a classic abandonment, and especially to Barbara Hoffe who said her piece of chatter in great style.

The end of the season makes no difference to a play like *Traffic*, by Noel Scott, which fills the Lyceum with a brisk tale of murder and mystery, having more character than the ordinary "thriller", thanks to the work of Dennis Neilson-Terry and Mary Glynne in the chief parts. These two inherit the Terry tradition, which means that they have no use for realism of the ordinary kind, but must have elbow-room for stage presence and gesture. Twenty years ago they would have found their material in a series of plays like *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, but the large-scale popular romantic play was the first to be crowded out by the coming of the talkie, which can present the spectacular side of it more effectively and the sentimental side with more banality. When the theatrical situation becomes clearer, and every kind of melodrama is recognized as belonging to the natural province of talk-film, they will no doubt get plays written for them by artists who understand the theatre and work for the theatre alone, and then being artists themselves they will be at home again upon their proper stage. But meanwhile a crook melodrama serves their turn, for it is at least a sublimation of life and not a slab of fact, and it brings their audience to the theatre and holds them there. What is more important is that it holds the players to the stage and removes them for these few critical years from the temptation to go over themselves to the talkies and make films which would be insincerer and emptier than their present piece. *Traffic* makes a useful bridge, and preserves the contact with the physical audience which is the very breath of life to the Terry tradition (or any other good theatrical tradition for that matter).

It is quite otherwise with Walter Hackett's *The Way to Treat a Woman,* at the Duke of York's, which is frankly a vehicle for personality. The people who go to it and enjoy it (who are many)

enjoy most of all seeing Marion Lorne be thoroughly natural. A tale of crime is only a background for her familiar tones and gestures, bird-like and confused and always laughable in their repetitions. No nonsense here about stage presence in the theatrical sense; it is the homely everyday presence that attracts. And it must be true that repetitions of gesture and mannerism are better liked by the average audience than repetitions of words or lines—else there would be no public for the play of this kind.

Dance With No Music (Arts Theatre), by Rodney Ackland, is a young man's piece full of quality, which re-tells the ancient tale of love among the players in the accent and idiom of 1930. All the characters but one belong to a theatrical company in a provincial town. We begin by supposing it to be a repertory company of the best sort, so sensitive and interesting and alive are its members at first sight. And we end with the conviction that it is a tawdry old stock company going the round of the one-night stands, for the glamour of art that is thrown over the subject decidedly fades, and all that remains is the glamour of life, something too crude in its ardent hue. That is inevitable, for the author is much more interested in life than in art, and above all he is interested in his own experiences and obsessions out of which the play is made. They must needs form the chief motives of his drama, and then the play itself must needs be an obsession with him, it must force itself upon the stage willy-nilly before he can sit down to write another (as he certainly must). Auriol Lee, who directs, understands all this very well, and brings out all the finer things in the piece without trying to slur over its glaring faults; so that, although nine out of ten of the audience find the last act unbearably false, no one bears any malice to its perpetrator and every one leaves the theatre feeling that a real talent has been expressed.



SHAFTESBURY AVENUE—SHAKESPEARE ROW

Not often does the London playgoer have the opportunity of seeing his favorite dramatist honored by two concurrent productions of the same play. But in June, 1930, under the auspices of Maurice Browne, *Hamlet* was simultaneously played at adjoining theatres in Shaftesbury Avenue—at the Queens Theatre by John Gielgud and the Old Vic Company, and, next door, by Alexander Moissi and his company. These snapshots, taken by a member of THEATRE ARTS' London office, show the two theatres advertising *Hamlet* at the same time.

The orgy in the first act of the Hasenclever *Antigone* as presented by the Kamerny Theatre of Moscow, and a classical Russian production at the Azerbaidjan State Art Theatre in Baku. These photographs form a pertinent comment on Russian production methods especially in the handling of large crowds, and suggest an interesting parallel with the American production of *Lysistrata* under the direction of Norman Bel Geddes.

HENRY IRVING

*A Chapter from a Biography**

By GORDON CRAIG

IT is now twenty-five years since Irving died, and today I have a reason for writing this little book.

The reason is that perhaps there are young men of twenty-five years of age who would like to know something of a remarkable man, and who would be glad to hear it from one of his pupils.

To those who have reached thirty years of age, it will also come as something fresh, because at the age of five they can hardly have been allowed to go to the theatre, and if one had chanced to see him in the last year of his life, in that year, 1905, one would have seen him when excessively tired and not quite himself.

Then there are still others who were seventeen years of age at that time, and are now forty-two, and who did go to see him, let us say in *Dante* at Drury Lane, and, maybe, did not think very much of him —not only because he was tired, but because the play was not particularly good—in fact it was particularly bad—and because at that time, Irving, like any great actor, was only able to play magnificently those parts which he had created when a younger man; and this *Dante* was a poor thing, and prepared by him in his sixty-fifth year —and prepared in Drury Lane Theatre, a theatre strange to him—not his old Lyceum workshop. It is difficult to work in any but your own theatre, when you look on it as your very home.

Irving was fifty-one years of age when I, a very young man in my eighteenth year, came to perform for the first time at the Lyceum Theatre, under his direction. But it was nine years earlier that I first saw Irving—it was in 1880. I was then eight years old, and was taken to the Lyceum Theatre, not to see the play, but to grow a little familiar with the stage of a theatre during a performance of a melodrama. The reason I was not taken to see the play was that when I was a child I was very highly-strung—hearty enough—more often gay than glum—but subject to impressions

* Henry Irving, by Gordon Craig. Longmans, Green, New York. J. M. Dent and Son. London.

more than most hearty children. I am told that a clown in a circus, balancing on a slack wire and pretending to fall, once sent me off into something like hysterics. I did not understand jokes which seemed to be dead serious things—and a melodrama full of delightful blood-curdling incidents was considered to be something I had best wait a few years to see.

So it was from behind the scenes of the Lyceum Theatre, from the O.P. corner, that I caught my first glimpse of Irving.

I was walking along in the dark, holding on to the hand of my guide, my mother, who was thrilled to feel that I was again behind the scenes of our home—the theatre. The first time I had been on a stage was when, in 1878, I appeared with my mother at the old Court Theatre, Sloane Square, in *Olivia*. I was on in the first act, amongst the villagers who crowd the scene—I was six years old. So when my mother who had joined Irving at the Lyceum in 1878, brought me to sniff the mountain air of the stage in 1880, it was so as to get me a little more used to the giddy heights, the mysterious glamour, the strange darkened realms of the place. I don't recall the day or the setting out to go to the theatre: they who write memoirs seem to recall everything—I cannot, and some of my readers will know I speak quite truly when I say that my perceptions registered only certain vivid impressions, and these were flashed on my imagination and took it captive.

So all I can recall is that I was walking along in the dark, holding on to the hand of E. T.[1] There was hardly a sound to be heard, only some quavering music; and there I saw a ghastly figure of a man with a red wound showing on the left side of his chest, and this figure was rising up from the stage floor, and gliding its way across the stage as it came up; and there too I saw H. I., with his back to it and to us, seated, and scribbling at a table. This was the end of the first act of *The Corsican Brothers.*

Till that moment I had always looked on the stage as a blythe sort of place, either where horses ran round in a ring, or where people laughed or burst into tears gaily, and brushed the tears away happily, and flung themselves from one side of the stage to the other—all done with the lights turned well up, and with a good deal of flutter and noise. But that was all over now—and so was the brief, terrifying glimpse I had of the darkened stage, the travelling ghost, and Irving; for my mother took me below, under the

[1] Already we had begun the English habit of calling people by their initials.

stage; and passing through a forest of wooden machinery, we came at last to a steep ladder staircase, ascended it—and arrived once more on the stage floor, on the other side of the big stage; and suddenly all the lights were up, and there, amidst a tremendous bustle, together with the sound of thousands of people clapping their hands —there H. I. stood, between the front curtain and the glowing yellow footlights, taking his call: and I, looking to the right and the left, behind and in front, still holding on to E. T.'s hand, went off with her to the stage door, and out into the street and its cold mauve daylight.

The next time I saw H. I. was in 1882, again at the Lyceum Theatre, and again from the O.P. corner; then I saw the curtain rise on the brightly illuminated first scene of *Romeo and Juliet.* As I can recall one or two things about *Romeo and Juliet* at the Lyceum, I must have gone down to see it several times—maybe in a box, or maybe behind the stage. I recall meeting F. R. Benson —he played *Paris*—and I remember hanging by his hair: this he let me do to show his athletic powers—strength of neck—something or other. I remember the production which followed—*Much Ado About Nothing*—and three more of the productions which followed these two; and in 1889 I learned that H. I. was called "the Governor."

Until then he had been "Henry". I had heard him spoken of as "Henry" by his friends, and he had signed himself in letters to me, "Henry"; I have two in front of me at this moment—*"Affectionately yours, Henry";* now what an extraordinary thing—for I can barely remember him today as "Henry"—only as master of the Lyceum Theatre—as Henry Irving. And that, of course, is as I like it to be.

The first letter is dated 1886 and was written on my birthday, at The Grange, Brook Green, Hammersmith, and consists of these few words:

"Make good use of your time, for fast time flies", therefore spend this sovereign as quickly as possible.—Henry.

and I see that the piece of paper has been folded up into twelve; therefore, the sovereign was evidently wrapped up in it. The quotation is from *Faust* . . . the English version by W. G. Wills.

If anybody is curious to see what I looked like at that time, they will find me in a group photographed on board the *Arizona,* in

which we came back from America in 1885. My mother and Irving had gone on this second tour to America in 1884, and my mother, feeling homesick, had cabled to someone in England who was going out to America, to "Bring one of the children". It wasn't that she didn't care which, only that she cared too much for both, and couldn't decide which was to be left behind. It was like that always. If I was given a cart, my sister was to have a horse, and, giving these presents, she was ever fearful lest she should put the cart before the horse. I think she prided herself on being just, but with her, justice was almost an unknown atom in the sea of her love. She . . . but it is of Irving I am writing now, and as usual she, I, my sister, and the rest give way before him—remembering too his peculiar antipathy to any crush, any unnecessary chatter about nothing which much matters. We didn't matter much, so we won't matter here.

Irving to me, at that time, was not an actor, but a very dear figure, sometimes appearing here, sometimes appearing there, generally bestowing a gift; in no way connected with thought in my mind—for I think I had not a thought in my head—but connected with vision, feeling. I had no notion of work in those days—I really did not know what it meant to work—which, by the bye, was a very great mistake of my nurse: a boy should begin to work when he is about three or four years old—then by the time he is thirty he won't make such a fuss about it, he won't feel that he has lost such a terrific lot of time. But you see, so it is; when a mother has worked since she was five years old, she says to herself, very illogically, but with overmuch joy, "My children shall not work until they have passed their tender years": and so I had the devil of a lot of time on my hands, and this very bad tuition of Irving, with his sudden appearances from nowhere, saying sepulchrally, "Make good use of your time, for fast time flies, so run off and waste this sovereign as quickly as possible"—really that was no way to educate an impressionable and tutorless youth about fourteen years old.

I have been spending that sovereign "as quickly as possible" ever since, and I never found it grow a bit larger or smaller—it seems to have remained just the same old sovereign. Of course you cannot stretch a sovereign out very much: so that when one day some years later, after I had become a member of his Company, Irving arrived at our house, at number 22, Barkeston Gardens, Kensing-

ton, and brought with him a volume of Green's *Short History of the English People,* of which a new edition was being published in parts at the time, price a shilling a part, and which was profusely illustrated; and when he let me get hold of it for a few minutes, and saw me devouring it with my eyes, he said, "I suppose you'll get the parts of this remarkable work as they come out". To purchase books was something which had never occurred to me, for my mother gave me any book she thought I might fancy. Besides this, although I was receiving £5 a week from Irving as a young actor, and the possession of money meant nothing whatever to me —I did not realize what money was for—I could not rapidly bring myself to contemplate spending a shilling a week on this sumptuously illustrated version of Green's *History*—and I said as much . . . my nurse had seen to it that by the time I had reached eighteen I was still about twelve.

Irving then gave me the second piece of advice. He said that he thought that of my £5 a week—"You—er—get, I believe, that sum —er—weekly"—I ought to be able to afford some books. Well, I got some books at once; I got some more pretty soon after; I ran deeply into debt over books; and now I have about eight or ten thousand, and I'm still going on at it—but I wonder whether it was a good thing to do.

All the advice which Irving continually gave me in the course of my early career, I consider the very riskiest advice which you can give—if you judge by the usual way people advised us all when young: but there is only one thing I regret about it, and that is that he didn't give it to me earlier. I should like to have gone onto the stage to earn my living at the age of eight, instead of being "looked after", and a futile attempt made to educate me. Being put to work is the way my mother was brought up—and Edmund Kean, and a host of actors, painters, musicians, and other good artists, great and small. They learned no Greek or Latin, knew nothing of mathematics, some could barely write and read—and this made all the difference to them—it helped to keep them ignorant of a hundred thousand things, the knowledge of which would have certainly distracted them, and possibly would have prevented the painters from painting, the musicians from composing their songs. Artists are not to be educated in the same way as are sensible people, and therefore it is a waste of time to attempt to do so. That they can be trained for artists by being taught the crafts is another

thing, and that is just what did not happen to me. So that when I first came to appear at the Lyceum Theatre, while I could speak a little German, and had won a prize in mathematics (to which I hadn't the faintest right), and I knew something about William Blake, Rossetti, and circus hoops, I knew nothing whatever of acting or of the Theatre—though I had it in my bones.

All I knew was that Henry was vanishing slowly down through the floor, just as I had seen the ghost come up through it, and in his place was a person who looked through me—no longer saw me—was occupied with a hundred other things and a hundred other people; and I don't know that I liked the theatrical profession so very much after all.

I stayed in the Lyceum Theatre from 1889 to 1897, so that for eight years I saw Irving in most of his parts, and at nearly all the rehearsals of these years.

Rehearsing, at that time, was not controlled by the clock, or checked by any Workers' or Actors' Union, as it is today. Rehearsing in Irving's theatre was long and thorough, and I believe that we actors were not paid during the time necessary for our preparation. Yet Mrs. Stirling, a very old lady in 1882, when she rehearsed and performed the part of the Nurse in Irving's production of *Romeo and Juliet,* was always "groaning out that she had not rehearsed enough"—so writes my mother in her memoirs. What Mrs. Stirling meant was not that rehearsals were too few or too short, but that Irving seemed to her to be giving too much attention and too much time to the sceneries, the lighting, the orchestra, and the other parts of the jig-saw puzzle known as "production".

Irving was one of those men who consider that if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well—and he was not blind about the production of a play. He saw that it consisted of a good deal more than the average actor of that day supposed. The average actor held that provided the ten or fifteen chief actors of the piece were rehearsed over and over again, the music, the sceneries, lighting, and costumes would take care of themselves—since they never realized to what use these accessories could be put. They felt about these things as do those men and women who at table are indifferent whether there is a napkin or no, whether a plate is hot or cold, whether the wine has been iced or warmed—the meat tough or tender—or the table-cloth clean. The production of a

dinner is not at all unlike the production of a play—taste, and much care for what seem to be unessentials, are necessary.

Here let me pause for a moment to ask you to get out of your head altogether the notion that what I relate of Irving and the Lyceum Theatre was typical of the times. It was typical only of Irving. No one thought of the stage as he did: no one felt about it that it should be reformed altogether: only Irving determined to reform it as much as one man possibly could do, while producing plays year in and year out.

Try, then, to allow yourself to be persuaded by me to conceive of something very extraordinary, lest my words, which must be as plain as possible, convey to your mind something such as may be seen today, in any theatre, at performance or at rehearsal, and you inevitably receive the wrong impression. It can be seen in such a theatre as Stanislavsky controls in Russia—or Reinhardt in Germany—and it was seen in Sarah Bernhardt's theatre—not in Eleanora Duse's.

Believe me when I tell you that these Lyceum days were exciting days. They were positively worth living, if you chanced to be a member of Irving's company, and they were a full education to a young man wishing to do well toward the stage.

Irving had broken with many a tradition, but he had not broken with the most ancient one of all—that of working untiringly.

It is something to work untiringly at fifty-one years of age—to be holding up not merely your own theatre, but the whole English stage; to be giving it its direction, and to be ahead of it all the time; to be producing Shakespearean plays, one after another; and when not producing Shakespeare's plays, to be lending something Shakespearean to the other plays—for that is one of the things that Irving did.

It is something to do all this, and it was something to be in the midst of it, as I was.

I think that no one on the English stage will deny that there is nothing today, in England, comparable with the Lyceum Theatre under the rule of Irving. I think there are many who would like to see England with another incomparable theatre. After Irving's time, we opened the flood-gates, and there has been a general inundation. It has done no harm. After Irving should come a flood!

You will ask me why there should be a flood after Irving. You may perhaps not be satisfied in your mind that there was sufficient

reason for it. The reason is that Irving was the end of a great line of actors.

He gathered to him all the old English traditions, he cut away from those traditions all that was useless to him, and then proceeded to display what was left, to exploit it further than it had ever gone before. Then he blew it up! The bits that came down were all seized on with avidity, and, on the strength of a chip, doubtless many of us thought we were the old block itself.

That is what generally happens at the end of a great line of tradition. It was what Shakespeare did with the Elizabethan drama. After reading Shakespeare, it is somehow not so good to be reading other Elizabethan plays . . . it seems to us all much thinner. It was what Molière did with the French stage. After *Le Malade Imaginaire* has been writ and played, it is best that Frenchmen turn over a new page and try to start something else. There is always a new way—Nature and Art are not dried up, and the artist has only to go to Nature and Art and ask for a new map, in order to find a new way—but it is best not to go Shakespeare's way or on Molière's path, unless you can go further along them.

I do not mean to compare Irving with either Shakespeare or Molière, any more than I would compare these fiery particles with Vesuvius or Mount Etna.

What I mean is, that after any natural explosion, things are altered, and there will only be another when the time is ripe.

THE SACRED HARP

By Carl Carmer

"Sacred Harp Singin'
Dinner-on-the-grounds
Whiskey in the woods
An' the devil all around."
(Alabama Mountain Song)

BOB waked me at four.

"Here's a black tie," he said, "Wear a white shirt and your blue suit and leave off the vest. I can't have you losing votes for me."

When we were eating our grits and bacon a few minutes later he looked me over critically:

"If you'd shaved the back of your neck you might be one of 'em."

We heard a long whoop outside.

"That'll be Tom Somerville," said Henry. "We'll be goin' in his Ford. He knows your pap and he's the vote-gettin'est man in Alabama. Mattie Sue put plenty grease on his grits."

He unbarred the door and Tom came in. He was short, thickset, and his grin, lining his sun-browned face, showed tobacco-stained teeth. He came straight to me.

"Mighty proud to make your acquaintance, Perfessor. Howdy folks. Bob, how's your pap. Ain't seen him since the singin' down at Samanthy. Thank yuh, Miss Mattie Sue. Sure is good grits and bacon."

Down near the road, under the sweet-gum tree, we climbed into Tom's Ford. Mattie Sue came last, almost hidden by a pile of shoe-boxes balanced expertly in her arms. Tom laughed.

"Don't let nobody git near them boxes o' yourn, Miss Mattie Sue. I figure on eatin' 'em as empty as a jack-ass's head." Mattie Sue grinned and Henry said: "Better try that vote-gettin' on some o' them Sand Mountain ladies. You've got her'n."

Tom cranked the Ford. "I sent all my tin cans to the factory in Dee-troit and they sent me back this. Said they hoped I wouldn't have no more accidents." He threw back his head and guffawed.

"Tom knows more Ford jokes than anybody in the county," said Henry. "Helps him get votes."

We could see the sunrise barred by the straight thin trunks of the lolly pines as the car traveled the narrow red road. In a dip we crossed a clear-water branch, the slipping wheels stirring up rust colored clouds that drifted down stream. Sometimes we passed a saddle-bag house like Henry's and once we met a plodding ox-team dragging a long tree lopped of its branches, and there was much geeing and hawing before we got by. Tom leaned out:

"Ain't yuh comin' to the sing, Bije?"

"Reckon. Soon's I tote this down by Deep Branch."

"Reckon you'll git there for dinner-on-the-grounds," yelled Tom. The road began to climb.

"Up Sand Mountain," said Henry.

The car struggled desperately and once we stopped to let the motor cool and to fill the radiator with branch water by means of a tin can. One last steep grade and suddenly we were on flat land, in the midst of tall green corn. As far as we could see the road kept one level.

"Just like a table," said Bob, "and it grows fine crops."

We overtook a lumber wagon drawn by a pair of drooping mules. Behind the driver's bench six sturdy ladder-back chairs held children, all sitting very straight and looking very shiny—the little girls brilliant in their checked ginghams.

"Reckon Missis Albrest couldn't come," said Bob. "She's been expectin' some time. 'Scuse me, Miss Mattie Sue."

The road was suddenly full of cars and wagons and we could see the little wooden tower of Sand Mountain Church rising above the corn. When we reached the big open space in front, it was already lined with cars and the pine grove beside it was dotted with horses, mules, and wagons. Tom drove the Ford full-tilt into the grove and stopped. We climbed out and strolled toward the church, faithlessly bringing Mattie Sue's boxes along.

Alabama sun and storm had stained the unpainted church a lustreless deep gray. Some piles of worn bricks held it a scant yard above the sandy earth. Built like a box except for its roof which sloped slightly down on each side from its center elevation, it boasted no adornment save a tower obviously meant to culminate in a spire. A few cross pieces, hanging disconsolately from the tower testified the builder's discouragement.

As we trooped in everybody already seated turned to look. Tom saved the rest of us from embarrassment by taking upon himself the onus of attention.

"Howdy Joe, Hi, Miss Ellie. Countin' on eatin' out'n your box today. Howdy, Aleck, how's craps?"

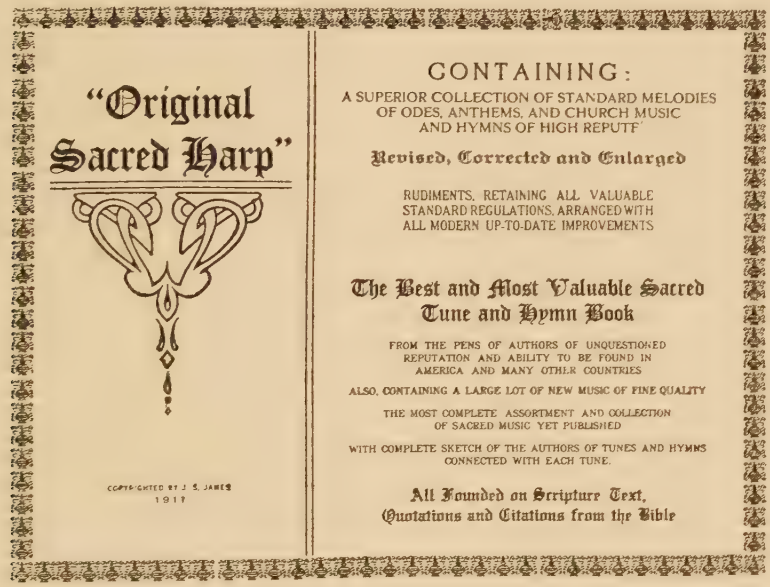
We sat on wooden benches with single plank backs. A center aisle led down to the platform which was surrounded by benches on three sides. A tall man stood on the platform.

"Trebles on the left. Basses on the right. Tenors in the center."

"What about altos?" I whispered to Bob.

"Don't mention the word," he said. "The real Sacred Harpers think it's a new-fangled and wicked affectation. They've been having a big fight with the Christian Harmony folks about it."

The tenors, I noted, were of both sexes. The seats of the trebles


"Original Sacred Harp"

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were crowded with women. Opposite them sat the basses, all men.

Henry passed me a thick rectangular book:

"I borrowed an extry note-book for you and Bob," he said. "That's Perfesser Hinton histin' the rhyme. He had a singin' school over in Winston County last month."

I read on the title page: "Original Sacred Harp, The Best and Most Valuable Sacred Tune and Hymn Book. From the pens of authors of unquestioned reputation and ability to be found in America and many other countries. With complete sketch of the

authors of tunes and hymns connected with each tune,* All founded on Scripture Text, Quotations and Citations from the Bible."

During the long opening prayer led by a worn looking man announced as "the Reverend Boone" I irreverently turned a page to the preface: "To a considerable extent the sacred song books of this section is badly tainted with operatic, secular and rag-time strains of music forms. Such compositions drive away, in place of promoting, religion and religious feeling. . . . In these compositions there are but few of the twisted rills and frills of the unnatural snaking of the voice, in unbounded proportions, which have in the last decade so demoralized and disturbed the church music of the present age."

The tall man was speaking:

"We'll begin with a short one—*The Bride's Farewell.* Some o' you gals goin' to git married soon ought to sing this pretty good."

The gals giggled. I wondered what Text, Quotation or Citation from the Bible could have inspired this "Sacred Tune and Hymn". Bob found the page for me just as the Perfesser said:

"Perfesser Stringfellow ain't come with his tunin' fork yet, so I reckon we'll have to pitch it the old way. Sister Dendy, you got mighty nigh the highest treble in the county. Sound a note, please ma'am."

A wild, high screech from the midst of the trebles.

"Tom Rice—git down below with that bear's growl o' yourn."

A deep rumble from somewhere among the basses.

"Ought t' be easy to git in between 'em," said Perfesser Hinton and sounded a nasal baritone *Mi.*

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*Among these sketches I later found the following: "Amariah Hall was a farmer, manufactured straw bonnets, kept a hotel, and taught singing schools. With him music was only an avocation."

"R. E. Brown was a Baptist minister and vantriloquest."

"Professor T. B. Newton of Georgia has a fine voice and sings every time opportunity presents itself."

"Mrs. Dana Shindler of South Carolina and Texas, first married Mr. Dana and afterward became Mrs. Shindler. She wrote on the death of her husband, 'I am a Pilgrim and a Stranger.'"

"To Lowell Mason of Georgia the music came naturally on reading the poetry. It flashed through his mind like lightning and he wrote and composed the music as if by magic. Mr. Mason said that he made no effort at all in this composition."

"During Jeremiah Ingalls's travels as a singing teacher, he stopped at a tavern in the town of Northfield for dinner. His dinner was very slow in coming. He kept thinking 'how long?' He fell into the rhythm of Watts' sacred lines ('How long, dear Savior, O how long, Shall this bright hour delay?') and the tune came with it. He named the tune *Northfield.*"

"*Sawyer's Exit* was composed by Mr. Sawyer on the day of his death and was set to music which in its Seculor form was called 'Old Rosen the Bow.'" (A tune well known to many generations of country fiddlers.)

"That'll be the pitch," he said. "We'll sing the music first. Are you ready?" He raised his arm, pencil in hand, and brought it down.

Tom and Henry took in great breaths and let out staccato yells. So did everyone else except Bob and me. A fearsome hodge-podge of sound arose. They were singing an outlandish gibberish—great sharp bursts of sound. Bob shouted in my ear:

"They're singing the notes."

I did not understand, but gradually, as I listened, I made out a tune, a wailing minor, and I discovered that Henry and Tom were singing *Mi, Fa, Sol, La.* I looked at the book and for the first time saw that the notes, though placed on the familiar scale, were printed in different shapes. *Mi* was a diamond I found by careful comparison of the book and the singing; *Fa* was triangular; *Sol* was round; *La* was square. Weeks later by study of the book I learned how these notes are repeated in the scale.

Exact as a metronome and with as much expression, Perfesser Hinton beat time. Everyone sang as loud as he could and kept on the beat. Suddenly as it began the great noise stopped.

"Now we'll take the poetry," said Perfesser. Still staccato and with all the breath they could summon they sang:

Farewell, mother, tears are beaming
Down thy pale and tender cheek
I in gems and roses gleaming
Scarce this sad farewell can speak.

Farewell, mother, now I leave you
Griefs and hopes my bosom swell
One to trust who may deceive me
Farewell, mother, fare thee well.

As the last note died the Perfesser began again:

"That's a good start. Now let's take number one-eighteen. That's a good religious tune. Music first."

Again the hubbub.

"Now the poetry."

Young ladies all attention give
You that in wicked pleasures live
One of your sex the other day
Was called by death's cold hand away.

The church was full now. People stood along the walls and the doorway was packed. Crowds were huddled outside each window singing lustily. I remembered being incredulous of the great numbers Bob had told me that these sings brought out.* Yet there were surely more than two thousand people in and around the church at this "right small meetin' at a bad time o' year". And they were all doing their best. Hard blows of sound beat upon the walls and rafters with inexorable regularity. All in a moment the constant beat took hold. There was a swift crescendo. Muscles were tensing, eyes brightening. The Perfessor stepped quickly toward the basses. Deep roars answered him. He wheeled, almost ran to the tenors. Nasal and high they responded. The trebles, screaming, rode above. In the front row a slim brown-eyed girl in an orange dress was throwing her head from side to side in the rhythm. Her black hair had fallen from a knot at the back of her neck, and flew about her face. She was gasping for breath. The silence that followed was restless. No one spoke, but there was much turning of pages—as if they were avoiding looking at each other. Relentlessly the Perfessor drove them into the next song. Beads of sweat rolled down his cheeks. As the last explosive chord sounded he drew a sleeve across his forehead:

"Perfesser Stringfellow from Lamar County just come in. He'll hist 'em for a while. I'm goin' out 'n wet my whistle."

A short wiry bespectacled man arose and took off his coat, displaying flowered suspenders.

"As the feller says, a mule runs faster out'n harness. Let's git up some noise on *The Dying Californian.*"

* * * * * *

It was almost two hours later when he raised his hand at the end of a song:

"I reckon y'all got a hankerin' to find out what's on th' inside o' them boxes. Well, it's time for dinner-on-the-grounds."

The men and women who crowded out of the door were not the grim taciturn lot who had entered it. A note almost of hysteria sounded in their laughter. They seemed to be glad of escape—still a little fearful.

We bore Mattie Sue's boxes back to the grove. Here each family

*The United Sacred Harp Musical Association is said to have between twenty and fifty thousand members—the largest singing society in the world.

took its position, flanked by boxes and proudly prepared to meet all comers. Tom Somerville grasped Bob by the arm.

"Come along, boy. I'll talk and you just keep feedin'. Every box y'eat out'n counts a vote."

The tops were off the boxes now, revealing great quantities of fried chicken, beaten biscuit, corn bread, pickles, preserves, white frosted cakes. No one dared wander far from his own boxes for fear of being gorged by friends who would be hurt by a refusal. Back-slapping and deep laughter, excited squeals and giggles accompanied all the hearty old jokes about human capacity.

Down in the gully behind the church was a spring. Young girls in bands of four or five strolled toward it, loitered on the way back. Disorganized groups of embarrassed boys followed. The girls seemed not to notice but their laughter was shrill.

A bell-note sounded from the unfinished tower. There was a repacking of boxes and a movement toward the church. Bob and Tom returned to us looking very genial. As we were re-entering I looked back. Girls still wandered to and from the spring and boys still followed. Inside, the singing began with increased vigor. The informality of dinner-on-the-grounds had had its effect. Under Perfessor Hinton's adjurations the singers reached a greater volume than before. More and more leaders were called on. The restless feeling, the suppressed excitement returned. But I noticed that the girl in the orange dress was no longer in the front row.

"Now we'll sing *Edmunds,*" said the Perfessor. A stir ran through the church—as of pleasant anticipation. In the first stanza I heard something about Adam. I listened:

He had no consolation
But seemed as one alone
Till to his admiration
He found he'd lost a bone.

Great was his exultation
To see her by his side
Great was his elevation
To have a loving bride.

I lost the words in the volume of sound. The song seemed endless. When I again caught on it had turned moralistic. I heard something about "the solemn duties of every man and wife":

This woman was not taken
From Adam's head we know;
And she must not rule o'er him,
It's evidently so

At last *Edmunds* reached its close.

"It's been a great day," said Perfessor Hinton "and let's end it by singin' *The Great Day.*"

A haunting melody rose, minor and plangent, a tune that lent itself in some strange way to the reedy, metallic quality of this strange chorus. The words were peculiarly distinct:

I've a long time heard that the sun will be darkened
That the sun will be darkened in that day
O sinner, where will you stand in that day?

There was a long pause and then the song lifted again:

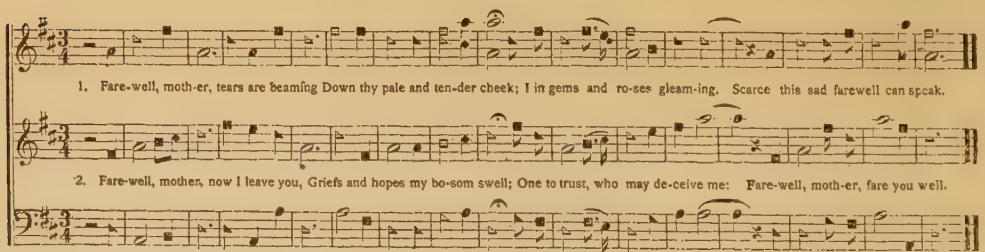
I've a long time heard that the moon will be bleeding

On it went.

I've a long time heard that the stars will be falling—
I've a long time heard that the earth will be burning. . . .

As the last stanza started the singers, still singing, began moving to the door. When the last note died the church was empty.

Then the grove and the roadside came alive with wagons and automobiles. There was a calling of goodbyes. We left late—Tom was still vote-gettin' for Bob—but there were still cars and horses in the grove when we rolled away. I glanced back toward the spring. An orange dress burned through the gathering dusk. Beside it towered a dark figure. Behind them stretched a long line of couples, girls no longer shrill, and boys no longer shy.



The Bride's Farewell *as it is printed in the "shaped" notes in a Sacred Harp "note-book". Observe the diamond, triangle, square, and circle notes.*

THE PROLOGUE

An oil painting by the American artist, Everett Shinn. (Courtesy of George C. Aronstamm)

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COMEDY PAIR

The Ventriloquist

GIRL ON WIRE

For many years Everett Shinn has been transferring his delight in the theatre to his canvases. Whoever looks upon them will find his own appreciations of the subjects heightened not only by brilliant colors and the effective reproduction of artificial theatre light but by their rich human qualities. (Courtesy of George C. Aronstamm)

I LOOK AT THE THEATRE

By NAOMI MITCHISON

THE one thing that I'm sure of is that I am the wrong person to look intelligently at the theatre. I don't go there nearly as often as I meant to once upon a time—the year before the war when my brother and I used to come up from Oxford for a matinee and an evening show, with a vegetarian dinner in between, as being the most filling at the price, and back in a delicious condition of emotional fulfilment and utter sleepiness by the midnight train. But when I do go now, I almost always start by recapturing quite a lot of that first fine thrill. I always think that this time it will be everything I want. The gates of fairyland are just going to open. I sit there gaping, prepared to swallow anything. And it is usually not till the end of the first act, at least, that my critical self begins to assert itself, to force the rest of me reluctantly to the conclusion that, after all, the magic thing has not happened. One has paid for an expensive ticket and scrambled dinner because of the curious hours at which English theatres like to start, and had one's toes trodden, and yet none of the dreams have come true.

And then, perhaps, I begin to ask myself, why not? Why can't I get back that sixteen-year-old excitement? Surely the theatre should have developed to keep pace with one's own development. Or ought one to stop going to plays at all when one is past—say twenty-five?

I believe one difficulty is that I am a romanticist—in common, I should suspect, with many or even most playgoers. I expect good plays by good authors, and must trust my own judgment, looking at a list of what is on, but I also hope for really stimulating and beautiful production. But almost all the modern production in London aims away from magnificence (that much under-estimated quality which Aristotle at least took to be a Good) and often, I think, away from beauty. One is interested, excited perhaps, but one is not carried away by that delight which one got from Granville-Barker's pre-war productions: *Midsummer Night's Dream,*

Twelfth Night and *Androcles.* I can't really believe that it was mere sixteen-year-oldness that left one gasping with pleasure at the final dance of the golden fairies through Theseus' palace. Probably the best production now is in some of the big revues. Presumably that is because there is a probability with revue of a really long run which will cover the expenses, whereas with a play one never knows. Yet I remember, two years ago, seeing a translation of Aristophanes' *Birds* in one of the smaller Paris theatres—a tiny stage and a most uncomfortable, crowded audience—which held the same magic. I am sure it is possible. And I want it.

The ballet is different, of course. That almost always fulfils the fairyland test. The only difficulty is managing to see it at all! One mustn't, I suppose, complain of prices, but it is sometimes difficult, especially for mothers of families, to fix one's evening quite so exaggeratedly long ahead. Or must I say "was"? What is going to happen to the Russian Ballet now? When shall I see the *Sacre* again? And why isn't there a permanent ballet of any nationality in London? I feel I can perhaps compare ballet and theatre more fairly than many critics, because I am completely unmusical. The thing that the orchestra is doing so heatedly and earnestly between me and the dancers, is essentially a noise, not materially different from the trumpets of Philippi or Dunsinane. It is not that noise which makes the difference between the ordinary Kensington reality of so much modern drama and the special, deep reality of *Petrouchka.* It must be—mustn't it—something to do with unity, with taking trouble, with that curious self-sacrifice which seems to me to make even preliminary ballet training like something Greek, like the dances of the Spartan boys for Apollo.

Failing production there must be some supreme actor or dancer. Sarah Bernhardt as an old woman, appearing, I think, in little single scenes at the Coliseum, was like that. The setting didn't matter, or even the fact that one's school-room French so often broke down trying to follow her. For that was in the sixteen-year-old days. I got it again from Isadora Duncan—her last appearance in London, I believe—with her rather ugly voice explaining what the dances were about, and her curious, ungainly body. Those two struck clean into the bull's eye of romance.

But there is another thing which is worrying me, and I wonder whether it is a disadvantage inseparable from the theatre, from the professional theatre, that is to say, as opposed to the religious

or amateur art. It is a little difficult to put, but I think the essence of it is that practically every man and most women are profoundly influenced by their profession or occupation, whatever it is. For the first few years perhaps, it may not grip them hopelessly, but later the shadow of their profession on their souls becomes apparent in their thoughts and faces and movements. The more deeply they are persons, on their own, the less obvious it is, but there is a stock-brokerishness about stock-brokers that is bound to show here and there, and a sculptorishness about sculptors. It holds for every kind of life: doctors, landowners, mill-hands, journalists, tennis champions, married women—I feel sure that I myself would be easily recognizable as one of the trade union of mothers, by some subtle and to me imperceptible shade about every tone and movement I use.

And the same holds good for actors. There is an actorishness about an actor, something quite apart from his own personality and shared to some extent by all members of his profession. I don't say that it is bad, still less could I define what exactly it is, but inevitably it is there. It is odd in a way, because all the time the actor is watching and copying the imperceptibles of other professions, sometimes the stock-broker, sometimes the sculptor. But behind it all the actorishness in his soul cannot help developing and gradually shining out through his body. One would not notice it if one were meeting him—or her—causally, but, just because one is sitting there, staring, after a time the thing becomes apparent, and, in the main, worrying.

For this reason there is always something extraordinarily pleasant about the quiet young actor who has not yet developed this. He may not have the technical finish, but, if he is going to be good, how very good, how specially delightful he is at the beginning of his career! I am remembering that *Romeo and Juliet* when John Gielgud—well under twenty—played Romeo, and Gwen Frangçon-Davies, then too, right at the beginning of her career, played Juliet. It is a ridiculous play anyhow, a young man's play, full of fantastically uneconomical verse, spilling the lovely English words like May blossom, and it needs two people equally young and uneconomical for its hero and heroine.

Yet, of course, young actors and actresses can be and often are supremely boring. They may have the advantage of being still unmarked by this curious shadow of their profession, but that does

not prevent their being incompetent or trying to copy their elders, in which latter case one gets the shadow imitated and emphasized and made all the more worrying to the audience. But sometimes, for instance, the Arts League of Service produces the real thing—the young Hermione Baddeley for one—deliciously fresh, the grape with the bloom on it. And sometimes one gets it among amateurs, not, on the whole, the high-brow London amateurs, but in small towns and schools and especially among undergraduates, though here, too, often, there is a kind of false professionalism which is very trying. To see an undergraduate show at its best, there is something to be said for going on the last night, when members of the cast quite often get sufficiently drunk to become supremely themselves without any shadows of occupation or profession, so that one would not even know they were undergraduates! In almost any school there are a few girls or boys who are, for the time at least, really brilliant actors, and they can often speak verse, a rare accomplishment among grown-ups. For playing Shakespeare, they have a kind of delightful transparence, so that the play gleams through unhampered by cleverness or modernism, and usually so little "produced" that no special conception of it is forced upon one. It is possible to come to one's own conclusions about *Macbeth* or *Julius Caesar,* and the inevitable bad and stodgy actors, so long as they know their parts, do not really take away much from one's startled pleasure in the good ones.

I suppose all this was at the back of the idea of boy actors, who might be depended upon for a time to have the unformed dewiness which is needed in so many plays, especially plays by poets. The sad thing is how completely children stage-trained for the stage, have it knocked out of them. In the process, presumably, of learning voice production and such necessary things, they are spoilt for the audience.

In Athens during the fifth century when the greatest plays were being written, there was, as far as we know, little or no professionalism, especially as regards the choruses of the tragedies. They were essentially religious. There were professional mimes and acrobats and singers, but these would probably only be used in satyr plays and perhaps comedy. There must have been hard training for actors and chorus, but it was not essentially very different from the training of the young men for war, and on the same kind of human material. The plays only happened twice a year, and when

they did it was in a curious, semi-political, semi-religious atmosphere, with all the citizens of Athens as audience and congregation. In other states, and especially at the myth or miracle plays which were given at Delphi, the religious atmosphere would be even stronger. Yet the actors were probably not priests, or, if they were, being a priest in a Greek state and in the service of the Olympian Gods did not bring with it the associations of modern priesthood. The priests and priestesses were comparatively little separated from the ordinary life of the community; the office was not always or necessarily a permanency. One wonders how a Greek mystery play would compare with the great religious play at Oberammergau.

But where has all this been carrying us? Not, I'm afraid, to any conclusions. Undoubtedly there is less obvious stage professionalism now than there used to be. Yet the audience, too, become subtler and more specialised, and they start at shadows like shy horses. Where will they find what they look for? In London at least there is no place for the amateur; sooner or later any amateur attempt seems fated to become dominated by fourth-rate professionals. Schools and universities remain, and it seems to me that for certain kinds of plays and most of all poetic or accurate historical drama, the undergraduate or school-boy treatment and outlook are almost essential. And it is to them we must look for the production of non-political minority plays—those with a definite political bias are almost sure to find a producer sooner or later in some group! Only a small percentage of the population—though it comes to a good many thousands when the individuals are all added up—want, for instance, to see Greek plays. And even they only want them occasionally. But it would be a pity if they could not have them from time to time. And Greek plays need the freshness, the dewiness of touch, which is so usually lost on the real stage. Modern plays need them less, I suppose, though even here I think that good romantics should not be content merely to sit back and take what they are given, but hope for the fulfilment of their fantastic dreams and demand more magic.

THE COMING OF IBSEN

Part I

By HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER

IBSEN'S was a powerful and disturbing mind. Encountered in his own tongue—so they say that know—he ranks high as pure poet, but had the theatre not been his battleground his impact upon his time could hardly have been so violent as it was, in England, at any rate. *Ghosts,* certainly, would have been accounted scandalous in any guise. We flatten our voices a trifle and circumlocate the unpleasanter part of its subject even now, unless we are very strong minded indeed. But why should Nora's exit from her doll's house, slamming the door, have given 1889 such a moral shock? There had been women enough in England, before Ibsen's Norwegian Nora was born or thought of, to whom her poor little revolution would have looked very small beer. Nor, unless they were most provoking—unless, that is to say, they insistently advertised their opinions by their conduct: be a free-thinker or a free liver, but not both at once, please!—did society hound them down. The Victorians were not consistently Victorian. No age is consistent except in the smaller history books, and few human beings are, fortunately, until they are dead. George Eliot was not treated as, in more patently shameless times, Mary Wollstonecraft had been. She saw to that; and distinguished ladies, irreproachably married, found themselves dropping curtseys to her when presented.[1] But this Nora with her little household, her work-basket and her Christmas shopping, her children and her bank-manager husband—caricature though he might be, Norwegians all of them with their outlandish ways!—this was still far too like Balham to be pleasant. And was the flag of domestic revolt to be set flying?

The English drama of the early Eighties was really—though one must never patronize the past, and the theatre to-day is not offering over much to the adult mind—a rather childish affair. The joyous idiocies of Mr. Vincent Crummles were no more, were banished at

[1] A fact, as the phrase is; for I had it from one of them.

any rate to even remoter nooks than the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth. Robertson was dead, and his chief legacy to the theatre seemed to be a gentlemanly generation of actors, and if cup and saucer comedy was still served, the china was now second-hand, and apt to look rather chipped and shabby. Irving, in his little kingdom of the Lyceum, would have nothing to say to modern drama at all. The Bancrofts had turned to Sardou, and in 1885 they retired. John Hare and the Kendals did what they could find to do. There was bowdlerized French farce, with, at the best, Wyndham's deft charm to cover its emptiness—or nakedness. There were Mr. Wilson Barrett and Mr. William Terriss in melodrama; the one, for preference, as a noble Roman with tunic cut low in the neck (lower than was altogether "nice" perhaps; but what a neck!); the other, as a Lieutenant R. N., his cap worn at the angle since made famous by Lord Beatty. A fancy dress bazaar in the Vicarage garden, with everyone enjoying it very innocently; suddenly the wind veers to the East! Such was Ibsen's advent.

This, of course, is not the whole story of the dramatic Eighties. We can find that fairly fully set out for us by William Archer, whose critical career more or less began with them, and who, as they ended, was to be the sponsor of this same devastating Ibsen. When in 1882, Archer publishes a little book, *English Dramatists of To-day,* the "recognized" men are Albery, Burnand, Byron (Henry J. not Lord—), G. R. Sims, Gilbert and W. G. Wills, and he treats them with what must seem to us now—glancing at such of the product as survives in print, at the best of it, therefore—an amazing seriousness. Then there are the young hopefuls. Mr. Arthur Pinero is a beginner with a lot to learn. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones ". . . seems to possess a good deal of culture and a great deal of earnest aspiration which may go far to supply the place of some more strictly dramatic qualities in which he is rather lacking." And of Mr. Sydney Grundy we are told that he ". . . is as yet not far on the wrong side of thirty; and if, as some of us venture to hope, the tide of culture is setting slowly but surely towards the stage, his opportunity must ultimately arrive". But with that the tale ends.

Hardly four years later, however, in another book, *About the Theatre,* in the long buoyant chapter "Are we advancing?" one at least of the young hopefuls, we find, has more than fulfilled his hopes. Mr. Arthur Pinero has become "the most original and

remarkable of living English playwrights, with a possible exception in favour of Mr. Gilbert". And here already is Archer the critic in quiddity. Of the plays which beget such praise *Lords and Commons* has had something of a success at the Haymarket Theatre, but *The Rector* and *Low Water* have been admitted fiascos. That does not matter. The public is wayward, actors are uncertain, the theatre is all hazard. Good plays succeed and bad plays succeed, good plays fail and bad plays fail. The business of criticism is to be discerning.

Another young hopeful had made strides, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. He and Mr. Henry Herman had produced between them one melodrama, among others, *The Silver King,* which won public praise from no less a person than Matthew Arnold. On his own account, too, he had turned out a three act dramatic study of country chapel folk called *Saints and Sinners,* which was not, perhaps, startlingly good, which had no great success, but in which, again, Archer's discerning eye saw promise of "the real thing". Jones himself came of Welsh farmer stock that had settled in Bedfordshire and he knew his subject at first hand, the smug, lower-middle-class world of the little market town, in which all that is dankest in the notorious "non-conformist conscience" breeds. Unluckily, if inevitably, he knew it only to hate it, with the hate which is unforgiven fear, as a prison from which he had freed himself; and to the end this withers the theme for him whenever he touches it. He could hardly, it is true, have won popular success in the theatre of that day—or of this—by painting even quite idyllic pictures of lower-middle class (the damnation is in the lower—) provincial life. For the actor-manager had then to be reckoned with, who, whatever his artistic virtues, did not see himself, and simply could not have let his faithful audiences see him, side-whiskered, reach-me-down suited, with pepper-and-salt trousers, slightly baggy at the knee. In the popular play, too, pretty ladies must parade in smart frocks, half a dozen at least, and as many more as the playwright could provide for and the management afford. Women went to the theatre as much for the dresses as the drama; they must have their money's worth. Not lowest of the barriers between Ibsen and the "recognized" London theatre was the distressing fact that there is hardly a fashionably dressed woman to be found in his plays. Hedda Gabler, to be sure; but heaven help us, even she *walks* home after a party!

"Henry Arthur", as he came familiarly to be, was an able craftsman. He wrote plainly and well. He had a vigorous if not very distinguished mind, which ran to humor rather than wit, and set, within the safeguards of British decency and honesty and with a softening of manly sentiment, a frankly sensual value upon things. Too self-confident and self-respecting to be an intellectual snob, he was, as Archer had quickly divined, a realist in grain. But, for all his acquired knowingness, Dukes and Prime Ministers (the Victorian brand) and their womenkind of the right hand or the left, remain romantic figures to him still, and he makes woolly work of them. Whereas the butchers and bakers and candlestick makers of Market Parbury are convincing even in caricature. The vividest impressions and the truest, which we redraw into pictures, are those bitten into the consciousness of our sensitive years. Now that Henry Arthur Jones's work is done, one would give the lot of it for the single play he might have written, had circumstances with him and the theatre of his day been a little different, some mellower, more charitably humorous enshrining of the little world which was native to him. For such things live.

But, indeed, the theatre of the Eighties was not asking for actuality. Jones and Herman, besides collaborating in melodrama for Mr. Wilson Barrett, had produced a certain play in three acts called *Breaking a Butterfly*. It did not pretend to be original; it was drawn—via the German, one supposes—from *A Doll's House*. Its vicarious authors probably only thought of the job as an honest piece of hack-work, and the result was no better nor worse than half a hundred other plays of the time. What is interesting is to see the changes they were inspired to make. The scene is laid in some English country town. Nora becomes Flora, and to her husband, rather terribly, Flossie. He is Humphrey Goddard and we find him gifted with a mother (quite unnecessarily) and with a sister (wanted for the piano playing *vice* Mrs. Linden, who disappears). The morbid Dr. Rank is replaced by a Charles-his-friend called, as if to wipe out every trace of his original, Ben Birdseye! He is not in love with Nora—Flora, of course; that would never do. But Dunkley, alias Krogstad, had loved her as a girl, when Humphrey Goddard stole her young heart from him; so love turned to hate and revenge is sweet. Observe the certainty with which our operators in the English market fasten on the flawed streak in Ibsen's play and cheapen it still further. The

tarantella episode, of course, will be the making of the whole affair (this was many people's judgment then, and now we rather find it marring) and this is left intact. But the third act sees the parent play deliberately stood upon its head, and every ounce of Ibsen emptied out of it. Burlesque could do no more. Torvald—Humphrey behaves like the pasteboard hero of Nora's doll's-house dream; he *does* strike his chest and say "I am the guilty one." And Nora—Flora cries that she is a poor weak foolish girl " . . . no wife for a man like you. You are a thousand times too good for me" and never wakes up and walks out of her doll's house at all.

Amazing! But yet more so, at first sight, Archer's comment upon the outrage. "It falsified, or rather ignored, the whole ethical import of Ibsen's play . . . and converted the tragedy into a commonplace comedy-drama. All this manipulation—I had almost said stultification—was necessary to make Ibsen tolerable to the English playgoer, and even then the piece failed to attract." One is tempted to read irony into it. But that was not Archer's way. No, it is a candid estimate, by a critic convinced that the English theatre and its public are advancing, of the standard of dramatic intelligence they have reached. Not so long after he is writing of a performance—somewhere in Scandinavia probably—of "the even more extraordinary drama of *Ghosts* which followed *A Doll's House*. . . . I have never experienced an intenser sensation within the walls of a theatre. It proved to me the possibility of modern tragedy in the deepest sense of the word, but it also proved to me the impossibility of modern tragedy on the English stage."

Yet the advance was patent, and it even quickened a little; and at any time the dramatists could have pleaded that they went as fast as their public would let them. 1889 saw the opening of the Garrick Theatre by Mr. John Hare with "a new and original play by A. W. Pinero". Note the claim in that "and orginal". London is no longer to be counted as a mere dowdy dramatic suburb of Paris. The play was *The Profligate* and the occasion was admitted to be important. *The Times* gave a column on the leader page to its review. "The English playgoer has long sighed for novelty" we are told "and although it may not be irreproachable in form as here presented, it is not unwelcome judging by the flattering reception accorded last night to actors, author, and all concerned." Since the action of the play passed in an "atmosphere of fashionable libertinage" this was as far as one could expect *The Times* to go.

"Sentimental puritanism" is the reproach we should be likelier to find levelled against *The Profligate* to-day. The young wife implacable towards her husband's past, the irretrievably "ruined" village maiden, the repentant libertine's suicide—though for this was temporarily substituted a more theatrically moral "happy ending"; 1930 sniffs at such a scheme of things. But in 1889 here was a daring deed; and the *Saturday Review,* remarking that "on previous occasions Mr. Pinero has almost invariably shown a desire before all else to break with convention" thanks him for discussing "a difficult subject with such remarkable delicacy". If Mr. Walkley read his *Times;* did Mr. Shaw and Mr. Beerbohm, the one then "doing" music for the *Star,* the other modestly emerging from Charterhouse, take a weekly look at their anonymous predecessor on the *Saturday,* and what did they make of him?

He was not so complaisant towards Henry Arthur Jones, whose *Wealth* had just been produced by Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket with a cast which, itself, one thinks, should have drawn London. He calls this "a very poor play". He was wrong, if a recent reader of its shabby manuscript may belatedly tell him so. A crude and slapdash and at times a quite preposterous play, but by no means "poor". For "Henry Arthur" had pluckily tackled a big and imminent subject, and had spread his canvas wide and laid on his colour boldly. The *Saturday* shakes a schoolmaster's finger. "Many things are desirable in a play, and their presence or absence affects the result; but there is one thing that is absolutely indispensable and that is a plot." To the post Ibsen and post Tchekov reader *Wealth* will seem all plot, and empurpled at that.

But the play's subject, one suspects, was the real trouble. Capital and Labour, and Labour demanding its rights; far more objectionable this than Mr. Pinero's "fashionable libertinism". Nor did Mr. Jones treat it with his rival's remarkable delicacy. The play was a failure; Mr. Jones would know better than to try that sort of game again. By no stretch of charity can *Wealth* be called a good play. Compare it to John Galsworthy's *Strife,* another essay on the Capital and Labour question written only seventeen years later, and it is fustian. But the welcome for the one owed something to the courage that had faced the failure of the other.

For the rest it was a yet more incongruous company that Ibsen came so modestly to join. If the playgoer wanted simple thrills, he went to *The Harbour Lights* at the Adelphi or *The True Heart*

at the Princess's. There was farce played by nobody very distinguished at the Strand, by Hawtrey and Lottie Venne at the Comedy and by Toole in a little rat-trap of a theatre named after him—it had once been the Folly, I think—that was wedged somehow into one side of the cellars of Charing Cross Hospital. There was sentiment at Terry's; Pinero's *Sweet Lavender,* a great success, with Edward Terry himself (excellent comedian by night, kindly if thrifty man of business, good citizen and churchwarden by day) as the Dickensian Dick Phenyl. Over the road at the Vaudeville Robert Buchanan's *That Doctor Cupid* promised more sentiment, less competently compounded, probably. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal proffered slightly stiffer fare at the Court with *A White Lie*; and one could see Charles Wyndham turned from admirable ease in farce to an ease and distinction yet more admirable in an even then old fashioned and ridiculous deodorisation from the French, which is still on record (evidence of our one-time shamelessness in such matters) as "an original comedy by Tom Taylor, Esq.", called *Still Waters Run Deep.* There was Grand Opera at Covent Garden and at Her Majesty's, the spacious old arcaded house in the Haymarket; and for comic opera, much in vogue, one had, besides the unrivalled *Yeoman of the Guard, Doris, Mignonette,* and *Paul Jones,* all very pretty and romantic. At the Gaiety Coquelin and Jane Hading were playing French comedies for a week or so. Fred Leslie and Nellie Farren had finished their season there; they were soon, untimely, to finish altogether, and with them the true lamp of burlesque went out. Irving and Ellen Terry were playing *Macbeth* at the Lyceum.

There were people who went to the Lyceum and to no other theatre; even so, perhaps, only to see Shakespeare there. They might further yield—to amuse the children—to the Drury Lane pantomime at Christmas, for this was not precisely a play. Gilbert and Sullivan came to be considered safe too. Their difficulty was not aesthetic but moral; the theatre was, by Puritan tradition, a gate to hell, one of the many. They would not have called themselves Puritans, there would be little else positively puritan about them; but a creed's taboos outlast all the rest of it, and man has proved "Thou shalt not" to be the only practical form of commandment.

In the London of 1889 there were also a few odd little shanties grouped round the gate of hell, buttressed against the wall of it,

so to speak; theatres that were not theatres, giving plays that were not quite plays, the innocuous near-beer of drama. There was Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's Entertainment, which consisted of an "Operetta" and a "Comedietta", with Mr. Corney Grain besides, gigantic and blandly comic, sitting at the piano singing "You shall see me dance the Polka". No deadly sin in enjoying that surely? There was England's Home of Mystery and Imagination, the Egyptian Hall—how one still misses the queer sight of it in Piccadilly!—where Messrs. Maskelyne and Cook (Mr. Cook, though, was already but a name) presented you, after a prelude of plate-spinning and card-tricks and conjuring, with a play which could be relied upon to have at least two ghosts in it; and far better ghosts they were than Banquo's at the Lyceum. Terrifying to the very young, but little that was morally deleterious about them! Then there were the Moore and Burgess Minstrels at the St. James's Hall—the *small* St. James's Hall; if you got into the large one by mistake you might have to stay through the first movement of a Brahms symphony before you could be let out again. They sat in a slightly curved row, four and twenty gentlemen in evening dress, "blacked up" (such was the technical phrase) with burnt cork, and wearing woolly wigs. For an hour or more they sang songs, sentimental and comic, some with chorus, some without; not all negro songs by any means, though many a now famed melody may have had its forgotten hour there. The blacking up was a tradition, and, like all traditions, had its value. It swamped personalities in a common personality; that unshifting array of expressionless masks fairly hypnotised you. Between the songs there would be witticisms contributed by the "corner-men" who were allowed fuzzier wigs, frills to their shirts, and more widely, pinkly hippopotamic mouths. But the ritual went forward with all dignity.

The second part of the entertainment provided a simple rough-and-tumble sort of farce, in which too, by tradition, everybody was "blacked up". Did this somehow cleanse it from original dramatic sin? It was all very jolly, whether you sought it for its own sake or as a safe half-way house to the devil.

Is there anyone left in England to-day who will tell us flatly that plays and play-acting are the devil's own? Just three months before Ibsen came to flutter our already mildly-fluttered dramatic dovecote Dr. Teape, the incumbent of St. John's Episcopal church, Edinburgh—I am quoting again from the *Saturday Review*—had

been invited by Mr. Walter Bentley to witness a performance of *Hamlet*. Why, we are not told. Probably Dr. Teape was a known discountenancer of theatre-going, and the innocently wily Mr. Bentley thought to trap him by this challenge; for surely no one would dare to blaspheme against the immortal Shakespeare! He mistook his man. As well have expected Elijah to say civil things about Baal-zebub the god of Ekron! One only hopes that he, in turn, was among the Sunday congregation at St. John's when Dr. Teape, impregnable in his pulpit, let fly. This play, said the Doctor, exhibited " . . . vice of a revolting character, a son driven almost insane, a usurper, three people poisoned, and the dead lying about as one left the scene. It was horrible". This will surprise Mr. Bentley, who, even as Hamlet himself, has long been lost in the clouds of "To be or not to be . . ." and "What a piece of work is a man?" and will almost have forgotten the plot. But the facts of it, so stated, are undeniable; and, adds Dr. Teape, "such a mode of influencing the public mind is thoroughly ruinous. . . . *The Newgate Calendar* bears ample testimony to the fact that the manner in which vice is represented, instead of being repellent, exercises a powerful and deadly attraction on those who come under the spell of theatrical amusements". *"Newgate Calendar"* goes rather far perhaps. But Dr. Teape compels respect. Even in 1889, even in Scotland, it probably took courage to talk like this about Shakespeare.

But, really, the nonsense about Ibsen and his work that was to flood the press during the next few years was little if any less ridiculous. It is true that after a century of varnished poverty, such a picturing of life—and, for all its Norwegian furnishing, of the sort of life lived by most of the audience, no dukedom or millionairedom as far removed from their actualities as the Britain of King Lear!—such drastic judgment upon it, and that hammer-blow method of his which at last compelled you to listen, found our parochial puppet show of a theatre and its sleepier critics very unprepared. But even so!*

* Part II of *The Coming of Ibsen* will appear in the November issue. The article is from the chapter which Sir Harley Granville-Barker contributes to *The 1880's*, a Royal Society of Literature publication, soon to be issued by Macmillan's.

ŘÍŠE LOUTEK

A Puppet Theatre in Prague

By Vio Mae Powell

PRAGUE, the ancient city of culture and beauty, has to-day theatres as interesting as they are unique.

You may twist your way down the crooked streets toward the Old Town Square and pay reverence to the old Nobility Theatre, standing like a jewel box of old Baroque, just as it did two hundred years ago when the première of *Don Juan* was given there.

Or you may stroll along the Vltava where the lights of the National Theatre are reflected in its stream. An active theatre and opera to-day, it stands proudly representative of the age when it was first erected as a monument to the Czech culture that its nation had been keeping alive for over three hundred years.

You may climb the hill to the Municipal Theatre in the old Vineyard, where on modernly equipped stages you may see the plays of the modern Czech writers, Capek and Langer, performed.

But if the visitor of theatres wishes to see the most modern, up-to-the-minute and beyond-tomorrow theatre in Prague, then he must leave the legitimate theatres and go to Umělecká Scěna, Říše Loutek, the Kingdom of Puppets.

In this theatre devoted exclusively to the production of marionette plays he will find a theatre that surpasses any in Europe in modern technical equipment adapted for puppet performances. In Czechoslovakia this is not such an unusual thing as it might seem, for here, since the earliest times, the puppet has not lost step in the forward march of the theatre, but has kept its popularity since the Middle Ages. Small wonder then, that in the planning of this new theatre, the best in architecture, decoration and adequate technical equipment has been employed for the sole display of the charm of the marionette. The thought that has gone into the planning of this theatre has been the result of years of experience of making and producing marionette shows by Vojta Sucharda

and his fellow artists. The result is the finest marionette theatre in Europe, if not in the world.

And where is this new theatre in Prague? In the most logical place in the world for a children's theatre. In a wing of the new public library building.

This new library houses not only a fine library and reading rooms, but is devoted to the exposition of all the arts. It contains concert halls, lecture rooms, and galleries for exhibitions besides the usual reading and distribution rooms. Therefore, because the marionettes of Sucharda and the plays presented by this group constitute an Art Theatre of Puppets, special provision was made to include a theatre for children and all those who love the marionette.

The entrance to the theatre is on Žatecka Ulice, a quiet side street away from the main traffic at the formal entrance to the library. After descending a few steps we come into a gayly colored and pleasant foyer. There is a busy hum and bustle of unrepressed excitement from the arriving small audience, who with the help of mothers are struggling out of coats and hats.

Children's theatre—yes. But among the three hundred in that fan-shaped auditorium there is many a grown up whose face shows the same fascinating eagerness.

Next to me is a three-year old minx on a seat that has, by some mysterious mechanism been elevated so that she can see over the heads of those in front of her. Her short fat legs stick impudently out in front, but she is safe and happy, and tells her mother so in blissful Bohemian explosives!

On my right an eight-year old boy has ratcheted his seat to a comfortable level. Oh happy man, who thought of adjusting those seats, so that children could see without scrooging or stretching on toes, or scrambling fretfully on weary mothers' laps! Would that some modern adult theatres would adopt the same plan!

The tiny excuse for a balcony is decorated with charming bas-reliefs in carved wood by Sucharda, who planned the theatre. They represent Music, Comedy and Legend.

As we look above to locate the soft pleasant lights about us, we breathe another sigh of delightful satisfaction. Stars—of course, stars in the heavens! Not heavy pendant fixtures that seem as if they were about to descend acutely and disastrously upon our heads —but stars of beautiful cut glass, set flush into the ceiling as securely as stars set in the heavens at night and shining as softly.

NACI

One of the amusing puppets of the puppet theatre, Říse Loutek, which is a part of the City Library building at Prague. He plays the part of Naci in Vojta Sucharda's comedy *Who is that Naci?,* and was created by the author.

LUCERNA

The distinguished puppets of Vojta Sucharda at the Říše Loutek in Prague are given a picturesque and consistently styled background by Madame A. Suchardová-Brichová in the puppet play *Lucerna*.

Suddenly their lights dim, and about the proscenium arch of soft brown marble there is a livid band of aurora colors. We are in darkness save for this play of color and our attention is directed to the music below it. The overture is excellently played by a small orchestra hidden in the pit between the stage and the house. The music, incidental as well as introductory, is carefully chosen to fit the mood of the performance.

The piece ends—the curtains part—and we are transported into a world where, strangely enough, a doll has gained the proportions of a man.

It may be *Kašparek's Trip to the Moon,* or *Hänsel and Gretel,* or *Twelfth Night.* But whatever play it is, Kašparek will have some part, for a puppet play without Kašparek would be an offense to the whole kingdom of marionettes. Whether he plays the leading role or whether, as in *Hamlet,* he is permitted only a few bows and a saucy handspring, he will be there and our juvenile audience waits for his antics in ecstasy. Kašparek is the naughty little smart-aleck of all ages and countries, whether he be called Punch, Buster Brown or Charlie Chaplin.

During the play you may be taken on a trip to Heaven or Hell, for here in Czechoslovakia the old mediaevel devil of mystery and miracle play times reigns as gayly and riotously as ever. Centuries of affirming and denying his existence by orthodox and unorthodox have not paled his vivid hue, and his atrocious capers are as incongruous and mirth provoking as ever! Czech children know him well! They fear him yet play with him in such a gay terror on St. Nicholas eve, when he accompanies the good Bishop to their door, bearing bonbons for the good children and switches and coal for the naughty ones. And many an old Czech tale would lose its thrill if there was no devil who might suddenly snatch the hero into the hottest of hells and no golden angel to rescue him from the flames.

The play ends. But when you see Sucharda's wooden carved figures and Madame Suchardová Brichová's excellently designed. and painted settings, you realize that this is no ordinary puppet show and know that the backstage of this theatre will prove as unusual and interesting as its auditorium and performance.

It is spacious and is a workshop of proper laboratory accommodations. In the basement is a large carpenter shop where the scenery is designed and built, and a paint shop where decorating is

done. Upstairs, long rows of steel cabinets contain the three hundred marionettes, hanging patiently in groups of their casts waiting for their turn at production. The puppets are made of wood 60 cm. in height and exquisitely carved. Features and expressions have been accentuated so as to carry. Consequently, every character in a play is a real individual conceived in the mind of the artist and each play has its own cast.

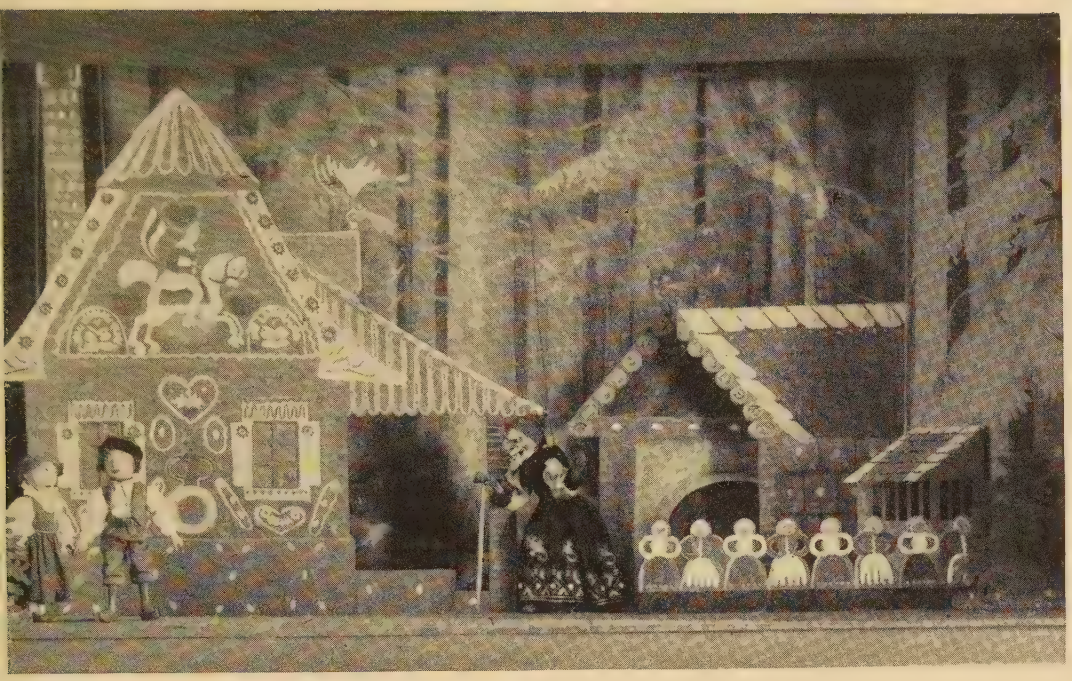
In the costume section more steel cabinets line the wall. These are made with deep drawers in which the costumes are catalogued and kept. French, English, Russian and American. Sucharda let us peek into the drawer to see what our native land had contributed to the world of fancy dress. *Indians and Cowboys!*

On stage we were told of the difficulties that had to be surmounted in order to adapt modern equipment for a marionette theatre. There are three levels to the stage proper. The lowest serves for a store room from which scenery and props are lifted by elevators to the second or main acting level. The third level over the stage is the one from which the operators manage the movements of the marionettes. There is sufficient room for an operator to be beneath the stage floor, for trap effects. There are several traps which can be moved or opened to the side for the magic scenes or apparitions. A four horse-power lift is used to operate the elevation of scenery to the stage level.

There are two stages used, a large one and a smaller one that fits in it. There are also two sky effects, one of muslin and a larger plaster dome. The main proscenium arch is 3 meters 40 cm. long by 2 meters 50 cm. deep. This can be filled in by a smaller arch which is adjustable according to the demands of the scene.

The lighting system is especially well thought out. The problem of lighting marionette shows is ever so much more complicated than that of the legitimate theatre. The greatest obstacle is the necessary shallow depth of the stage scene which deprives the electrician of many possibilities. Footlights must be avoided because of shadows of the manipulating wires on the set. Overhead lights are also apt to get in the way of the strings of the operators.

The most satisfactory solution to this problem has been found to have as much of the lighting permanent as possible. Strips of lights covered by colored glass cylindrical screens, mechanically changed, form units to light the horizon and general illumination. These are supplemented by reflectors, lens lights and small spot



THE SUGAR PLUM HOUSE

An imaginative set and characters amuse large and small spectators alike in a version of the Hänsel and Gretel story dramatized for puppets and entitled *The Sugar Plum House* which is part of the varied repertory of the Říše Loutek.

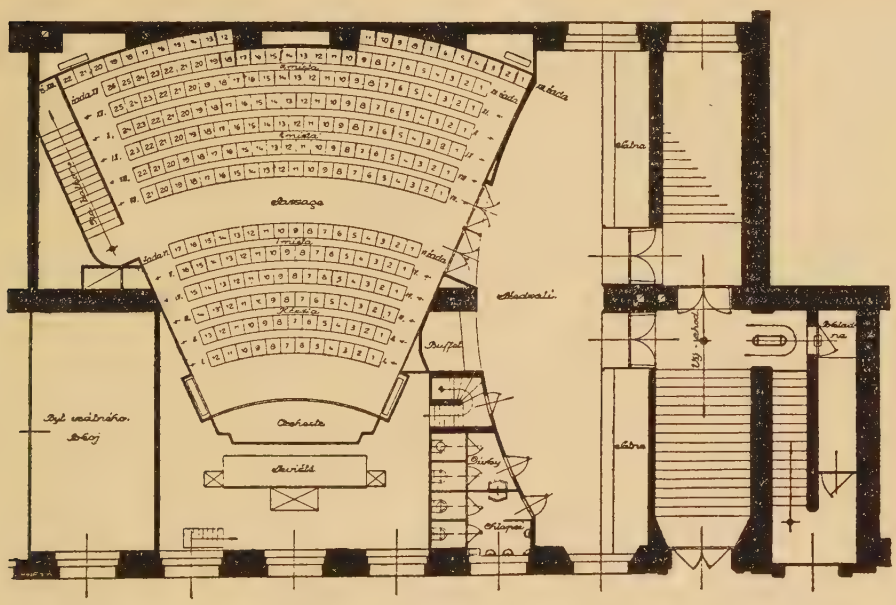
Řise Loutek

Panels designed by Votja Sucharda for the balcony of the puppet theatre in the city library at Prague.

lights which operate on a weak circuit stepped down by a special transformer. A modern switchboard with 28 rheostats, governing every color, with interlocking master wheel gives every possibility for control for subtle color effects.

Sucharda and Doctor Klika give this explanation of the theatre's organization and growth. In 1919 a small group of professional people: doctors, administrators, educators, artists and musicians, decided to amuse the children of their neighborhood, and each other, by producing marionette shows on Sunday afternoons.

Sucharda carved the first famous Kašparek from an old bed post that had been lying in the attic. The services of all were voluntary and every one in the group delighted himself with his pet hobby of puppets. Permission was received to give performances in a school building. The idea grew. The aim was always for the artistic and the beautiful as well as the ethical. It has finally culminated in the city of Prague recognizing the worth of this group and donating a portion of its new building to the exclusive use of these artists. Performances are now given twice a day, every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday in the winter season.



Plan of the Puppet Theatre at Prague.

BURLINGAME PUBLIC LIB.

THE THEATRE'S BATTLE WITH ITSELF

By Ivor Brown

THE history of the theatre is a subject of peculiar fascination because it is the history not of one art but several. The poet jostles the man of argument; the decorator jostles both; the living mime is jostled by the marionette or by the producer who would have his player no other than a dancing doll at the end of a wire; the player, exploiting his personality, jostles the author seeking to express his ideas. Theatre Street is now an alley, now a boulevard. Always it is a scene of battle. Somebody is manning a barricade; someone else is preparing to storm it.

Painters have wrangled and will for ever wrangle about the matter of their art. Is it to present the accurate image, the swift impression, or the abstract idea? Should it abandon mimicry of life to the camera and concentrate on the imaginative use of form? These are problems of one profession. In the playhouse the issues are even more tangled. The measure of this confusion about the function of drama is to be found in the astonishing fact that the word "theatrical" is often used as a term of belittlement or even of abuse. "What's the new play like"? "Oh, theatrical stuff". By which is meant little else than trash. Is the word "musical" so used? It may be that a select few who run a special cult of disharmony as the extreme ambition of the ear's delight would describe a sonata as "musical" in order to abuse it. But to most of us the remark would seem platitudinous and futile. It would be like denouncing meat for being meaty, or butter for being buttery. Yet to call a play "theatrical" is nearly always to pass slighting criticism.

The fact that a play called "theatrical" is a play dismissed as unworthy implies some inherent disagreement about the business of the drama. And dramatic history is a long record of attack and counter-attack. "Theatre" asserts its rights to masquerade and is scolded as a naughty boy. Theatre turns modest, becomes the abstract of its time, holds its mirror up to nature, and is rebuked for

being hum-drum and contentedly exchanging the traditional and glittering robes of Thespis for "the rags and tatters of pretended fact" as Mr. Ashley Dukes has described modern dramatic realism.

The primitive man is always intensely utilitarian. He does nothing for fun. He does everything for a purpose. He acted the dead hero's life in order to insure the dead hero's immortality and to have his immortal god-head as an ally of the community, shedding prosperity from on high to flocks and crops. That is how the drama started. It was certainly no joke. But fun soon began to break in. The Attic comedy is a direct descendant of the fertility rites, begun by the first audacious, blasphemous, and obscene rebel who observed that all this miming about procreation might be turned into a bit of a lark. The first rebel, who must have been ferociously abused for his innovations, made Aristophanes possible. The descendant of fertility rites became, by a twist of human wit, the mordant wit of the *Lysistrata* in which refusal of fertility has become the theme. Tragedy began at the tomb; it was a civic ceremony and a memorial service, enriched by vast choric effects. In the earliest Greek tragedy whose text is preserved, *The Suppliants* of Aeschylus, there may have been 300 performers. Certainly there were more than 150. Yet in far less than a century the realists had got to work on these trappings, cut down the choruses, and introduced discussion on moral and social problems as the essence of the matter. Euripides used the theatre for his particular form of self-expression by eliminating as far as possible the old ceremonial and theatrical masquerade. He was bitterly attacked for discussing in his drama "the things of wont and use", for humanising the heroes of the saga, and for substituting critical debate about the gods for the old chants of the worshippers. The long war had begun.

It is not often remarked of the English Elizabethans that one of their principal contributions to the theatre was the turning of an art into an industry. The previous English drama had been either essays in classicism done by and for the student classes or folk performances maintained as much for their religious value as for their power to entertain. The Elizabethans were the first professionals, the first who lived by pleasing. Shakespeare was as eager as any man to make money by his work, but he immediately saw the dangers of professional "theatre". Hamlet's speech to the players is the cry of a dramatic artist who wanted his vision por-

trayed with dignity and relevance against the antics of the professional entertainers, who were hunting for "laughs" at any cost and endeavouring to lift what there was of a roof. Through Hamlet the theatre denounces theatricalism. Hamlet cursed the gagging and the over-acting and the gawdy exhibitionism of the theatre when it is turned to a peep-show for sensationalists or a circus-ring for the guffaws of the groundlings.

But the theatre won. In the eighteenth century the actor had it all his own way. The theatre tore the drama to ribbons in order to make its flags and bunting, and Professor Odell's description of how Shakespeare fared from Betterton to Irving is a record of vandalism that is almost incredible. Garrick, a great founder of the Shakespearean cult, had as much respect for what Shakespeare wrote as a musical comedy droll has for his libretto. *Lear* was habitually played with a happy ending and Kemble made an operetta of *The Tempest.* The personality of the player was more important than fidelity to the part and Shakespeare, even in mutilated versions, was only deemed sufferable if served up in a sandwich between harlequinades, farces, and raree-shows of all kinds.

To record these facts is not to denounce them. There was obviously an immense vitality in this gold and purple theatre of the eighteenth century with its succession of Roscian monarchs who stirred the passions and loyalties and hatreds of the mob. Perhaps our own serious attitude to drama is wrong to be so solemn; our genuflections may be a poorer compliment in the long run to the powers of the Muse than were the mixed bombardments of laurels and cabbages which the old actors had to face. The New Yorkers who joined in the Macready riots in the middle of last century may have lacked good manners; but they were at least excited about something, even if the something was not strictly relevant to the standards of dramatic art. On the whole a playgoer who loses his temper is preferable to one who only goes because it is the thing to do and yawns through the evening with a complete unconcern.

To understand the nineteenth century of Europe, which dictated its fashions to an America that had not yet become dramatically self-conscious or creative, we must bear in mind that the theatre was still an appanage of aristocracy, or even of the royal family. It was part of the glitter of life. Its aim was to be completely useless except in so far as "a night out" is good for the system.

In Puritan countries the middle-class were deeply suspicious of drama. In London, for instance, it was not till the Bancroft's régime in the sixties that playgoing received its badge of respectability. The architecture of nineteenth century playhouses with its lavish use of baroque, its fussy metal-work, and its dreadful presentations of plump Muses and goddesses in sylvan scene on the curtain, walls, and roof, all bore witness to the general atmosphere of theatricality. The theatre was to the street as the booth to the Fair Ground. The audience was to feel essentially that this atmosphere was different from that of home, that it was all grander, more brilliant, and overwhelmingly bizarre. The "super-cinemas" of today achieve the same effects with different methods. They are democracy's parallel to the great Royal Theatres of European capitals. Enter the Burg Theatre of Vienna (most regal of play-palaces now democratically absorbed) and you feel immediately that the play is not the thing, but the spirit of play. Naturally the plays which dwelt in palaces could not be home-spun. They had to deal with impossibly lovely people doing impossibly wonderful things. The superlative quality of the things seen and heard might be excess of gallantry or wickedness or of wealth, just as in the films there must be "thrills" and then "super-thrills" and the leading lady must wear clothes scheduled to cost the price of a battleship. The audience demanded a world without taxes, school-fees, colds in the head, and wet days and they got their money's worth in glossy, patent-leathery romance.

The reaction was slow but universal. Ibsen was protagonist. Gradually, as the Free Theatres ran across the world, the drama awoke from its long sleep to do battle with itself. If you read the memoirs of the liberating pioneers, you will find everywhere the same story, everywhere the same complaint from Manchester to Moscow and so across the ocean. The arrows fired by Shaw in his prefaces or in the dramatic notices which he contributed in the middle-nineties were barbed with the prose style of the greatest pamphleteer since Swift. But they are the same arrows that fly more gently through the reflection of theatrical reformers like the Meiningen group or Antoine or Stanislavsky. They are the same arrows that are always taken from the quiver when the young theatre turns against the tyranny of the old and seeks to overthrow the dominion of purple and gold.

Reality of theme and temper, so long an exile, fought its way

back. The moment had come and the men were ready. As Stanislavsky puts it in *My Life in Art*:

> "Have you ever noticed that in theatrical life there come long, torturing periods of inactivity during which there appear no new and talented writers on the horizon, no actors, no stage directors? And then suddenly, unexpectedly, nature spews forth a whole theatrical troupe and adds to it out of its bounty a writer and a stage director, who, all together, create that wonder, an epoch in the theatre. And at once, to balance the scales, there appear their opponents, who try to destroy the new enterprise with their own even newer one. But fashion changes. The eternal remains".

The results, on the author's side, were Tchekov, Ibsen, Shaw, Sudermann, Hauptmann, and a score of others. They found their producers or were found by them, as Tchekov was found and saved from suicidal despair by Stanislavsky. There was no room for these men in the theatre of purple; so they made their own. They crushed the antics of the too masterful actor; they vetoed old tricks of writing and of mummery; they courageously told the sight-seer and the thrill-hunter to come in and find intellectual salvation.

And now the battle sways back again. The theatre of prose is challenged by a theatre of poetry which has the great victories of ballet beside it, a theatre which denies the validity even of Stanislavsky's "spiritual realism" so eager is it to abolish imitation of life and canvas-mimicry of room and scene. The new reformers are proud of the word "theatrical" which lately was deemed the symbol of vulgarity. They seek to impose a vision upon life instead of patiently extracting the patterns of things seen. They are declamatory instead of didactic and assertive instead of argumentative. Russia is one strong source of this inspiration and Russia is ever extreme. After the fidelity to fact that was in Stanislavsky, the extreme master of quietism, came the scorn of fact that is in Meierhold who rides the whirlwind of the new, dynamic stage-craft.

Such warfare passes over the routine theatre wherein the industry of entertainment continues to compete for the pocket-money of the millions. It will continue to mingle wit and millinery, good looks and good lines, laughs, sobs, and lingerie. It will rely a little more on personality in order to counter the mechanised attraction of the film and it is significant that in England the actor-managerial

system, which was the target of "advanced" criticism in the early years of the century, is now being restored with general relief. The appetite for personal magnetism, on which the cinema depends so enormously, is returning and the starring of the single player is being accepted without regrets and even with enthusiasm by those who once denounced it as the cause of all the trouble. The new Famous Players' Guild is a sign of our times, as well as a sign of old times. It indicates a swing of the pendulum. We hunger again for the big figure in the big scene. There is a story of a certain London actor who was asked by a friend if he would like to knock his faithful audience all of a heap and create an unparalleled sensation. "Certainly," he said. "Just tell me how." "Oh" said the friend, "Just move six inches out of the centre of the centre of the stage for one moment in the evening." That gentleman may soon be returning to his own.

But what of the theatre that is not enchained to the industries of Broadway and Shaftesbury Avenue? It will not crudely meet the declining taste for realism with a return to eighteenth century methods and the enthronement of the popular actor who has his plays built round him to fit him and feature him like a smart suit of clothes or a court uniform. Here the theatre's battle with itself is taking subtler means of attack. But, at any cost, it means to restore the word "theatrical' to a place of proud usage. It will do so by more cunning cultivation of the unusual. The theatrical epoch from which we are emerging gloried in the things of "use and wont." It was content to make a lawyer's office so like a lawyer's office that one began to fumble in one's pocket for the lawyer's fee, or the home so like a home that one instinctively wanted to run out into the street. My own taste inclines to that type of play, if it be written and staged with saving grace, humour, and power of selection. But too often it has been buried in its own detail and I fully understand the revolt against it and the new demand for unusual effects, the hunger for a fresh interpretation of the historic word theatre, which means, after all, not a forum or a college or a school, but "a seeing-place". It is impossible to restore the drama of spectacle because the cinema can beat the play-house at that game every time. What then remains? What is the next movement in the theatre's ceaseless war of positions?

It will not be another phase of Expressionism. That brief fire

has burned itself out. Doubtless it did some good, but the theatre has always had, and will always have but a scanty corner for abstraction. These men that are ideas soon become intolerable company. They are as dull as the cubic packing-cases (called décor) on which they sit. I foresee exactly the reverse of triumph for Mr. Zero and the Eighth Engineer and Ninth Plutocrat and all the puppets from this worked-out workshop. Instead of more abstraction, we shall have the opposite, more personality. The great actor is coming back to his and her own. He will be in turns vulgar, superb, cheap, glamorous, musical, noisy. But he or she has the Promethean fire too long damped down. At any rate the signs point that way in London, where we are to have a new crop of actor-managers.

Secondly there is a chance for poetry. By that I do not mean a renewal of verse drama in iambics. I mean rather plays of poetic quality. They may be written in prose but they will do poetry's job. Poetry is direct, where prose is diffuse. Poetry is intuitive, where prose is rational. Poetry looks at one thing at a time and sees straight into it, while prose takes the long, circumspect, the all-things-considered view. Poetry affirms where prose argues. Prose has dominated our theatre these thirty years. Poetry will come back to it. *The Green Pastures* is a poet's victory. It doesn't argue about a colour problem; it is an affirmation of colour. There will be more such.

Production, turned to a cause of its own, is fatal. The great director will not succeed as an exhibitionist. He must be interpreter, but he will not have money in his purse. He will work quite simply on the drama of intuition and assertion. He will remember, what in the recent craze for lighting stunts and scenic architectural contraptions was too much forgotten, the power of speech. If poetry and personality come back to the stage, the old rhetorical quality of drama must come back too. The public that is fatigued with "talkies" will turn to talk, to human voices, blended or solo. For centuries fine diction was the first necessity of the player. That standard may return. Acting will not be measured by a muted verisimilitude, but by its creative beauty of vocal and physical parade.

And when these things come, there will be a cry of "Back to Nature". There is no truce in the theatre's battle with itself. Nor should there be.

What about Lysistrata?

IT was my privilege recently to see a performance of the Philadelphia Theatre Association's production of *Lysistrata.* All the comments I had read had been so favorable, the names of those enlisted in the enterprise so mighty, that I expected to be pleasurably thrilled. By all accounts here was a distinguished, brilliant American production of a famous classic, rendered into scene by a foremost designer, acted by a notable cast, and presented, more importantly, with love. I bought my tickets with a real anticipatory pleasure. This pleasure remained and was heightened when, being seated, I saw the formal stage, quietly reposed, dimly lighted, awaiting action. Three minutes after the play began, however, I felt a disappointment that did not lift for the balance of the evening. Perhaps I was too eager to be pleased. At all events I am very humble in submitting my reactions for such interest or consideration as they may be worth.

I was sitting in the mezzanine, about the fourth row, and I missed the words of the chorus throughout most of the performance. I also missed those of Miss Cooper in her quiet moments and the diction seemed slurred for most of the principals save Mr. Truex. Such robust quality of voice as was there, strained to fill the house and was at times definitely harsh and strident.

The setting, architecturally, in its solid mass, was an effective one, in tune with the spirit of the play, affording with its arrangement of levels and spaces, its large rhythm and compelling movement, opportunities for interesting stage compositions sensitively and subtlely lighted. In the intermissions, before the batteries of light and color poured upon it, and when a faint glow behind realized its three and created its fourth dimension, the setting captured miraculously the spirit of a Greek stage awaiting its priests and actors. But the lighting, as the acting began, successfully and energetically defeated this illusion. It was spotty. Round circles revealed the wrinkles in the cyclorama and cut discordant patterns on the proscenium arch. Magentas and straws, or such was the effect, mixed rather haphazardly. Actors walked from one color into another, a hard glare into a "hole" or dark space, and their shadows on the sky kept distorted pace with them. The spirit of *Lysistrata* undoubtedly demands a brilliant, healthy lighting and plenty of it, but I believe that the realization of that intention demands more subtlety in execution than that of a sombre tragedy. Its very excesses of gaiety require a firmer hand, the necessity for "seeing the faces" must be even more rigorously balanced in the harmony of the completed scene. This discipline seemed to be lacking, and as the lighting lacked this quality, the setting failed of its intention.

Design in movement lacked clarity a great deal of the time. One beat or wave of action washed into another. Crests were never quite reached. The pulse, consequently, was rendered inarticulate most of the time. The Humphrey-Weidman dances, for instance, were excellently in keeping with the Bacchanalian, festive urge, but were somewhat lost in the composition

of the stage picture as a whole, which was not clear. The levels, in this particular scene were used as one expected they would be used; such design as there was was that of easily anticipated pattern, and that is not good enough.

And lastly, and here perhaps I commit a great heresy, I question the production's sincerity. Perhaps most of the company enjoyed the play and their parts within it, but if they did, they found the enjoyment in sole performances, for they did not find it, it seemed to me, in playing with one another, in vital connection with one another, in ensemble. The words and the business of the choruses floated away from, and were quite unrelated to, any but the slightest kind of inner emotional necessity or wish. There was gusto in the text and lines full of juice and meat, slices to roll under the tongue with a full delight and whetted appetite. In the text is a zest for living, clear-eyed, sturdily muscled and rarely flavored. The acting achieved this in a certain manner of externals, sometimes in farce, sometimes in burlesque. But it was not inspired. Not much of the laughter came from the stomach. It did not have that spark and radiance the setting before the play commenced so definitely promised. The setting, then, was a beautiful thing, alive with overtones, sincerely purposeful. And while I don't at all expect *Lysistrata* to be prayed over or solemnized in production, it must, nevertheless, dig down to the core and have its roots in something as important as that pre-performance scene had. And why was it deemed necessary to have a curtain call, the actor's parade, at the end?

I submit all of this not argumentatively or dogmatically but rather as a big question mark. I want to know—why? If I am wrong I want to know that, too. Is the production a high-water mark in current theatricals because it is the revival of a Greek classic, because it is proving popular, because it is a fine production, or because of all of these or which of these? It is spectacular, it has color in costuming, the comedy in the play is inescapable—but does the production really "ring"?

Or does its genuine value lie in the thoughts aroused by reading the line in the programme, underneath the title of the play and announcement of its author: *"First Performance at the Lenaeum Theatre, Athens, in January, 411 B. C."* These are quite wonderful words.

HERBERT GELLENDRÉ

CAIN: *Feels like I been walkin' fo'ty years.*

For the new de luxe edition of *The Green Pastures,* Marc Connelly's play of negro religion in the deep south, Robert Edmond Jones has made ten full-page black and white illustrations based on his stage sets which were so integral a part of the New York production. The book is published by Farrar and Rinehart, through whose courtesy four of these illustrations are reproduced.

NOAH: *Bring 'em on board! De Lawd is strikin' down de worl'!*

MOSES: *You go ahead. De Lawd's got his plans fo' me.*

MOSES: *Yere I is, Lawd. De chillun is goin' into de Promised Land.*

The Green Pastures

The Green Pastures, A Fable Suggested by Roark Bradford's Southern Sketches, "Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun", by Marc Connelly, with illustrations by Robert Edmond Jones. Farrar & Rhinehart: N. Y. $25.00.

MUCH that makes *The Green Pastures* an enchanted performance cannot, of course, be transplanted to a printed page. The power and poignancy of the spirituals cannot be imagined from a reading of them; nor can the full richness of the words and dialect be felt from seeing it symbolized in print. Nevertheless the play in published form well repays the reader. More evident than ever is the inspired arrangement by which Mr. Connelly made drama out of his material. More human and understandable than ever seems the attitude toward the material, an attitude which Roark Bradford first assumed and Mr. Connelly later adopted. These facts are comforting, for the time will come when posterity will be judging by these pages and appraising the values of a drama that made history in 1930.

The following passage may serve as an example of the reading qualities of the play. In it the same simple directness, the same earthy idiom which make the play effective are easily observed.

God: Well, Adam, how dey treatin' you? How's things goin'?

Adam: Well, Lawd, you know it's kind of a new line of wukk.

God: You'll soon get de hang of it. You know yo' kind of a new style with me.

Adam: Oh, I guess I'm gonter make out all right soon as I learn de ropes.

God: Yes, I guess you will. Yo' a nice job.

Adam: Yes, Lawd.

God: Dey's jest one little thing de matter with you. Did you notice it?

Adam: Well, now you mentioned it, Lawd, I kind of thought dey was somethin' wrong.

God: Yes suh, you ain't quite right. Adam, you need a family. De reason for dat is in yo' heart you is a family man. (Flicking the ash off his cigar) I'd say dat was de main trouble at de moment.

In an over-size volume bound in green and gold board the publishers have given this classic of the modern theatre a fitting setting. Unlike many ornate de luxe editions the book preserves a dignified integrity. It has a frontispiece in color, ten full-page black and white illustrations, reproduced by the off-set method, and a number of head and tail pieces all done by Robert Edmond Jones who, it will easily be remembered, designed the sets for the production. As in the performance the scenery enhanced and emphasized the beauty of the play, these illustrations impressively and understandingly complement the text. The play is printed on rag paper and in large type. The words of the spirituals (which were not included in the trade edition) are printed in full. The autographs of

Mr. Connelly and Mr. Jones further add to the book's value. The publishers are to be congratulated on making available to drama lovers so beautiful an edition of so beautiful a work.

CARL CARMER

"CUT!"

Censored, The Private Life of the Movies, by Morris Ernst and Pare Lorentz. Cape and Smith: N. Y. $2.75.

A NEW theatrical season is opening on Broadway. Or, to be more accurate, just around the corner from Broadway, for the legitimate theatre has been shouldered off that famous highway by America's fifth largest infant industry, the movie business. The play now lurks in the side street, while the movie flaunts its super-daylight floods along America's theatrical main-street. If the new season is a good one, and produces another *Rain,* another *Coquette* or another *Front Page,* the Infant Industry will grab it and after spending a million or so on it at Hollywood, will dish it up again for us, in sound and motion, on the silver screen. But will we really see the play as it was conceived and acted on the stage? What happened to *Rain, The Patriot, Coquette, Burlesque* and all the rest on their way from theatre to Movie Palace? The answer is contained in Morris Ernst's and Pare Lorentz's amusing and stimulating study of movie censorship, appropriately subtitled, *The Private Life of the Movies.*

Movie censorship, in its legal aspect at any rate, is a surprisingly modest and illusive flower. Active and despotic as it is, it shuns the publicity generally connected with movie affairs, but the authors of *Censored,* with true journalistic zeal have traced it to its various sources. There are, as a matter of fact, only six officially constituted state censorship-boards, manned by a handful of small pay public officials. Yet this restricted group exercises an amazing control over the vast amusement-supply of the Great American People. Morris Ernst and Pare Lorentz have ferreted out these guardians of public morals and taste, sketched their life histories, published their pictures and catalogued some of the cuts and changes which they have effected. Their book, however, is far more than a catalogue of the sins of censorship, amazing, indeed incredible, as these may be. It is a plea for a forgotten Bill of Rights, a demand for freedom of expression, an appeal for an adult screen. Marshalling their facts with precision and effect, they build up the structure of a combination which today stands in control of a nation's diversions. They show us a handful of fanatics uniting with the embattled Club Women of the country, re-enforced by the nervous movie-magnates themselves and backed by that ogre of the modern liberal, the all-pervading, all powerful Corporate Interests. They show us Wall Street itself, joining hands with Mrs. Smith of Podunk and the Czar of Hollywood in a noble effort to make the movie safe for infants, idiots, and investors.

The authors of *Censored* have done an excellent piece of work, in no way invalidated by their obvious and impassioned prejudice in favor of liberty, sanity and common-sense. They are armed with facts, and re-enforced by statistics and their book is invaluable to every student and lover of the stage. The theatre, for all its airs, cannot ignore its Gargantuan and now vocal offspring. What is theatre today is movie tomorrow, and movie interests are coming more and more to control both theatre buildings and theatre productions. Moreover, the whole question of censorship is vital to the theatre, as it is to all art, and for that matter to all government and social order as well. The theatre is a necessary part of the gigantic link-up which is taking place in the amusements and eventually in the public education of this Age of Electricity. The authors of *Censored* indicate the steps already taken in the process of super-amalgamation: "Movies, talking movies, newspapers, radio, music houses, gramaphones, television—all indirectly controlled by interlocking financial interests." The possibilities of super-censorship are obvious, the methods of combatting it less clear. The

vigorous statement contained in these pages is, at any rate, a blow in a good cause.

ROSAMOND GILDER

OTHER NEW BOOKS

New Plays from Japan, Edited by Glenn Hughes and Yozan T. Iwasaki. Appleton: N. Y. $3.00

ONLY recently has the Japanese dramatist broken away from tradition to write what the Occident knows as modern drama. The No, the Kabuki, and the doll plays are not yet laid aside; their influence is strong, and relatively few are the Japanese writers who would construct plays in the manner of their Western contemporaries. The collection of *New Plays,* which Glenn Hughes and Yozan Iwasaki present, shows that the new playwrights have advanced but a short distance toward the absolute in modern theatrical effectiveness but that they have distinctive virtues of their own to add to the world theatre. Of these perhaps the finest are earnestness and simplicity.

The last of the dramas in the volume, a one-act entitled *Burning Her Alive,* by Senzaburo Sudzuki, is the least interesting. It tells a pointless story of a sadistic artist and his unfaithful model. None of the characters arouses either sympathy or interest.

The three-act comedy, *A Family Affair,* by Saneatsu Mushakoji, is much more skilful. Its subject is a familiar one to the western world—the breaking down of social traditions by the younger generation. Straightforwardly presented with few examples of dramatic device it catches the reader's sympathy and holds it to the end of the play.

The drama, *Death,* with which the book begins, is far superior to the other plays. Here the late Takeo Arishima wrote a poignant powerful study, simple but with the simplicity of truth. The scenes between the husband and his dying wife are honest and tender. The use of dream-scenes as flash-backs into the lives of the characters is effective and gives the play a superficial resemblance to Monckton Hoffe's *Many Waters,* produced in New York last season. *Death* is a wise and sympathetic and civilized drama. Had he chosen to live, Takeo Arishima might well have been the first of the great Japanese playwrights to use the modern mode.

Sincerity and naiveté are the outstanding merits of these plays. Much of the contemporary technique has yet to be learned. It is to be hoped that it will not be learned at the expense of finer qualities.

Stage Scenery and Lighting, by Samuel Selden and Hunton D. Sellman. F. S. Crofts: N. Y. $4.50.

OCCASIONALLY a book is published that immediately enters the category of essentials. To the student of the mechanics of the theatre this is such a book. Within the limits which it sets for itself, it is a complete, thorough, practical study. With it any intelligent worker should be able to manage the mechanics of a complete production. To the Little Theatres and the College Theatres, usually suffering from a lack of sound technical advice, it comes as a boon. To everyone who has staging problems, even the professional, it will be useful as a competent reference.

The writers of the book have in their experience acquired a wide knowledge of the requirements of the small theatre. It would be difficult to find a mechanical problem unmentioned and unsolved in this volume. Its table of contents shows it to be logically arranged and comprehensive; its illustrations are many and well chosen; its diagrams are effectively and simply explained; it contains a bibliography, a list of dealers and manufacturers of stage equipment, and an excellent index.

The purposes of the authors are succinctly expressed in a preface: "The plan of the book is intended to make it useful in two ways. It is, first, a reference manual for the individual of some experience who wishes to find specific information on a particular problem. For this person the material is carefully arranged in major and minor divisions with a system of titles, subtitles, and cross-references for convenience in finding needed information.

"The book, in the second place, is a text for one with little or no experience who

wishes to study the subject of scenery and lighting from the beginning. For this person the material is arranged under separate topics and chapters which present the subject step by step in a logical sequence."

It is seldom that a reviewer may honestly indulge in superlatives but this book deserves them. It should be, and no doubt will be, in the library of every progressive small theatre.

The American Scene, An Anthology of American Plays, edited by Barrett H. Clark and Kenyon Nicholson. Appleton: New York. $5.00.

BARRETT CLARK, who has done as much as anyone to make known the plays of his own and other lands, and Kenyon Nicholson, author of *The Barker, Torch Song,* and a well-known play editor, have combined to make a new record of American life as told in plays, in a volume which they call *The American Scene.* This has been done before and fairly well, we think, having done it ourselves in *Plays of American Life and Fantasy,* but there is so great a variety of plays, much used and little used, always full of local color, among the number in this table of contents that the volume serves its purpose especially well. Exactly what this purpose is, the authors explain in their preface. "It is not possible at this time to determine precisely how far any artist may go in reproducing the atmosphere of any particular place before he can be regarded as "native" and in a country like America, where a thousand localities offer a thousand different atmospheres, it is impossible to take any one play and call it characteristically American. It is for this reason that we have tried to let our authors express the differences between one place and another, to exhibit as many divergences from national standardization as possible; we consider every local province chosen by our authors as important and as interesting as every other."

The list of playwrights whose work is represented in the volume includes such well known names as Eugene O'Neill, Theodore Dreiser, Michael Gold, Paul Green, Stuart Walker, Booth Tarkington, Edna Ferber, Susan Glaspell, Stark Young, and Lynn Riggs. The plays cover districts which are separate and unlike as, for example: *Bound East for Cardiff,* whose setting is laid in a tramp steamer midway between New York and Cardiff; *Chuck,* in an old township of New Hampshire; *Money,* in the East Side slums of New York; *The No 'Count Boy,* in a negro cabin in the South; *'Lijah,* in a Southern Colonial home; *Bumblepuppy,* in a farmhouse in Arkansas; *The Feast of the Holy Innocents,* in a home in Millet, Wisconsin; *Bread,* on a farm in Kansas; *Reckless,* in a covered wagon in the Indian Territory; *The Organ,* in a homestead in Wyoming; and *Good Vintage,* in a ranch house in California.

Here's To Broadway, by Edward T. Perine. Putnam: N. Y. $4.50.

THIS is the pageant of Broadway through the years. The ghosts who haunt the street re-create much of American history. Washington and Lafayette, Lincoln and Grant, Dewey and Joffre and Lindbergh have looked upon this lane of the people on days that meant much to them and to the nation. Two of these no longer had eyes to see when they made their last solemn journey along its length between the mourning ranks of those whom they had served. Broadway has sounded to the tramp of soldiers going to the wars and to that of veterans triumphantly returning. It has been gay with the Hudson Fulton Celebration and sad after the Equitable Building fire. It has worshipped Jenny Lind and has driven Macready from the city in riots that cost many lives.

These facts and others Mr. Perine tells in his book. His method is that of the recent historians who have found the details of life in a period more significant than they have been assumed to be in the past. His material is well chosen and his style, at times a bit ornate, is always enthusiastic. He has linked the past and the present of America's best known street in a highly effective and interesting manner.

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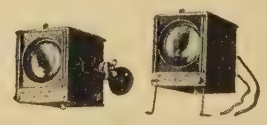

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LYNN FONTANNE AS QUEEN ELIZABETH IN MAXWELL ANDERSON'S *Elizabeth The Queen*

The WORLD and the THEATRE

London Critics—Publishing Plays—Chaplin's Revolt—Georges Porto-Riche

LONDONERS who look for their favourite dramatic critic on a given page do not need to fear quick changes. The senior critic is certainly E. A. Baughan, who has been with the *Daily News* (now the *News Chronicle*) continuously for 25 years. James Agate has been writing for the *Sunday Times* for nine years; W. A. Darlington for the *Daily Telegraph* for ten years; Ivor Brown for the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Observer* for seven years. St. John Ervine, who no longer writes regular reviews of first nights, still contributes a weekly article to the *Observer*. Charles Morgan, who succeeded A. B. Walkley as critic of the *Times* four years ago, is well known as a weekly contributor to the New York *Times*. S. R. Littlewood formerly with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is now critic of the *Morning Post*. Hannen Swaffer, critic of the *Daily Express* and the *Sunday Express* manages by vigorous personalities to keep himself prominently in the public eye.

A RECENT dispatch from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the New York

Stage Hand *by Beatrice Tobias*

Emile Zola's play, *Thérèse Raquin,* was recently performed at the Theatre Dal Venne in Milan with Emma and Irma Gramatica as principals.

●

After the English war plays come the German, with a decided tendency towards the political and philosophical in their approach. Somebody was bound to write the first dramatic chronicle of events in the last week of July, 1914. Somebody has done it, and he calls himself Georg Wilhelm Müller (the height of commonplace names as a German *nom de plume*), and Reinhardt has produced his play, *1914,* at the Deutsches Theater. It receives much praise for the *mise en scène* and direction, but little for the matter and style. Emil Ludwig, by the way, has indignantly denied the charge that he wrote it or that it is a dramatization of his book, *July, 1914.* Historical figures, made easily recognizable by masks, appear in the scenes.

Ernest Toller finds a characteristic subject for a new play in the mutiny of 1917 in the German fleet, and his *Feuer aus den Kesseln* is said to be passionate, humane, often deeply moving—all that we must expect of Toller—. The play, as produced by Hans Hinrich, is in twelve short scenes the first of which, showing the stokers at work in the bowels of the ship, is said to be very impressive in its stark realism. By a coincidence the same subject of the 1917 mutiny is chosen by Plivier, author of *Des Kaisers Kuli,* which has been produced by Erwin Piscator with all his usual accompaniments of film, gramaphone, and noises. The play is a dramatization of Plivier's novel of the same name which was published about a year ago with great success. Its climax occurs during the battle of Jutland in which the author was engaged. Piscator's next production is to be *Brest-Litovsk* by Rehfisch.

●

At Salzburg, in honor of the tenth anniversary of the annual festival, the square in front of the Festspielhaus is named Max-Reinhardt-Platz.

●

John Erskine's recent plea for native American opera in the vernacular (made in announcing the plans of the Juilliard Graduate School) seems to be answered, in small part at least, by announcements that there are to be two such productions this season. One of these is to be Hamilton Forrest's *Camille,* presented by the Chicago Civic Opera Company with Mary Garden in the title role. The other, said to be a radical departure from European opera in form, is Deems Taylor's *Peter Ibbetson,* based on the novel by Du Maurier and the dramatic adaptation of the book by John Raphael. Mr. Taylor composed the music for the opera and collaborated with Constance Collier (who aided in making the original play script) in writing the libretto. The sets, designed by Joseph Urban, are so arranged that there will be no waits, and the music is continuous.

Times announced the renewal of an old warfare that experience and common sense should have rendered impossible to-day. It stated that "although the house had been sold out for three performances, presentation of *Street Scene* at the Little Theatre . . . by members of . . . the University of Manitoba was called off . . . because of the refusal of William A. Brady, New York producer, to grant performing rights. The cast had been at work for more than eight weeks". There seems to have been no dispute about the amount of royalty. The Manitoba group evidently made the mistake, hardly excusable to-day, of assuming that they could get the rights to any play they wanted and of preparing a production and undertaking rehearsals without making sure. Everybody connected with any theatre, big or little, professional or collegiate, should understand, in this day of established copyrights, that a play is a property not to be used without the consent of its owner or his agent. Mr. Brady was certainly within his rights in refusing to grant permission for the amateur playing of *Street Scene* if he thought such performance detrimental to his property and that of the playwright he represented. Most American (and English) managers would agree with him; which may, or again which may not account for the fact that most modern plays written in English have no life of their own separate from and beyond that of their first commercial production, while vigorous continental plays, produced in a score

LUTE SONG

Residents and vacationers at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, last summer had the opportunity of seeing *Lute Song,* an adaptation by Sidney Howard and Will Irwin of the Chinese play *Pi-Pa-Ki,* produced at the Berkshire Playhouse under the direction of Alexander Kirkland, also a member of the cast.

Among the many events that made the summer of interest theatrically was a production of Halcott Glover's drama, *The Second Round,* by the Manhattan Repertory Theatre Company under the direction of Walter Hartwig, at the Community Theatre of Bristol, Connecticut. The sets, showing the exterior and the interior of a tavern, were designed and executed in the workshops of the Manhattan Theatre Colony, under the direction of Alexander Wyckoff.

of theatres at the same time, go on year by year in the repertory of an increasing number of playhouses. In any case, Mr. Brady's comment on the subject is about as wrong as can be. He is quoted as saying, "It is the widespread publication of plays that leads such groups as these Winnipeg actors innocently to believe that the purchase of the book also gives them the right to performance. I shall ask the Dramatists' Guild to pass an amendment to their agreement with the managers which will make it impossible to publish a play without the consent of the manager involved until the play has run a certain number of performances". Such an amendment surely would do more damage, not only to the playwright but to the producer who owns a play, than half a dozen performances by amateurs who have not yet learned to read a copyright notice. It would take all hope of life from plays that fail on Broadway and what percentage of plays that is Mr. Brady knows. It would kill the interest in the drama in those cities where the theatre has been dead during the last twenty years and where the published play is the only bulwark against the movies. It would destroy the interest in the drama which is just beginning to be aroused all over America in places that have never had a theatre. Much better to arrange with the publishers if necessary to print on every page, "Not to be performed without permission" than to keep one play from reaching a wider reading and perhaps another playing public.

Mr. Erskine's further mention of the necessity for operas of which the librettos could be heard "without the listener's losing his self-respect," recalled to mind the experiments in opera rewriting made by Harald André, former director of the Royal Opera at Stockholm, who worked on the theory that great composers were usually far in advance of their contemporaries in music but behind them in the appreciation of the other arts. To this he attributed their acceptance of opera librettos both inept and inartistic. A considerable part of André's success at Stockholm was due to his having the words of some of the old operas rewritten by competent poets of a later day. All of which seems interesting as preliminary to the announcement by the Vienna Staatsoper that it will produce this season Verdi's *Don Carlos* with a new libretto by Franz Werfel (author of *Goat Song,* etc.) and Richard Strauss's new reading of Mozart's *Idomeneo,* for which Lothar Wallerstein, Viennese stage director, has written a new libretto. Also on the program, according to the announcement of Clement Krauss, are Weinberger's *Schwanda the Bagpipe Player,* Egon Wellesz's *The Bacchantes* (first performance), Rossini's *The Italian Maid in Algiers,* (in Hugo Röhr's new arrangement), Erich W. Korngold's new version of Adam's *The Nürnberg Doll,* and Wolff-Ferrari's *The Four Oafs.*

•

Martin Browne, the young English director formerly connected with the dramatic department of Carnegie Institute of Technology, has been appointed by the Bishop of Chichester to the newly created post of Director of Drama for the diocese (which includes all of Surrey). It will be remembered that the bishop, as Dean of Canterbury, encouraged John Masefield to write *The Coming of Christ,* and had it produced in Canterbury Cathedral. He hopes to make drama again an ally of the church.

New York continues to strengthen its claim to the title, "the most cosmopolitan theatre city." A Hindu theatrical troupe, headed by India's famous actor, Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, and including in its number a group of Nautch dancing girls, will appear on Broadway toward the end of October according to recent announcement. Arrangements have been made by Carl Reed and Elisabeth Marbury for the company to appear under the auspices of the India Society of America. Bhaduri, the oldest son of a Brahmin family, resigned a professorship of English literature at Calcutta University to become a professional actor. His first production in New York will be *Sita,* his own adaptation of the ancient epic, the Ramayana.

•

The most romantic note of the season is that Maude Adams is returning to the stage. Her first appearance in John Colton's new play, entitled *That's The Way With Them,* will be at the new McCarter Theatre of Princeton University.

•

During the season of open-air opera at Göttingen, Germany, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was produced with music from Henry Purcell's *Fairy Queen.* According to the New York *Times* the production was well received and the use of the Purcell music hailed as a welcome change from the usual Mendelssohn.

•

An American woman playwright has written a drama based on the life of America's greatest woman poet whose role is to be played in New York by a prominent American actress. *Alison's House* is the name of the play in which Susan Glaspell has dramatized the life of Emily Dickinson. It is to be produced this season at the Civic Repertory Theatre with Eva Le Gallienne as Miss Dickinson.

NEWS that Charlie Chaplin's next picture, *City Lights,* is practically completed has aroused much speculation and discussion among enemies and friends of the talkies. A synchronized music score is Chaplin's only concession to the sound film; there will be no dialogue according to his statement. A French journal, over the signature of Maurice Mairgance and under the title—The Revolt of Charlie Chaplin—remarks as follows: "Charles Spencer Chaplin, the sole artist of genius of the cinema but a man, nevertheless, who refuses to adapt himself to the new form of motion picture expression and who has set himself against his friends, against the men of affairs of America, against the hundred and twenty million spectators in that country . . . once more stands alone. He has made a magnificent decision, one worthy of him, and expressed it publicly at Hollywood. It is irrevocable; if he should recant now it would damage his prestige. 'I shall never speak in a film' he says, 'I hate the talkies and will not produce talking films. The American industry is transformed. So much the better or worse, it leaves me indifferent. I cannot conceive of my films as other than silent. My shadow appears on the screen as in a dream, and dreams do not speak. Artists, like Will Rogers, Bebe Daniels, Gloria Swanson, Bessie Love are interested in interpreting the talking films because they are thus able to present the maximum of their talent. But they are actors; as for me, I am a mime and all the nuances of my art

Mayo Methot and Guy Kibbee, who give two of the most convincing performances of the early season in Kenyon Nicholson's *Torch Song,* Miss Methot as a cabaret girl recruited into the Salvation Army and Mr. Kibbee as a traveling salesman for undertaker's supplies or, as he contends, "underground novelties". (*Photograph by Vandamm*)

THE BAR-TENDER

A GUEST

The new revue, *Three's A Crowd*, makes effective use in one of its more grotesque portions of these distinctive masks designed and made by Constance Ripley. The double-mask and the extra artificial arms show the bar-tender in a speak-easy as he is seen by one who has imbibed not wisely but too well. The figures appear in *Night After Night*, a scene from the revue. (*Photographs by Vandamm*)

would be destroyed if I were to accompany them with words or with sound effects.' . . . After three years of experiment," Mairgance continues, "the Americans are not producing as many 100% talking films. They have understood, when they have opened their mouths, the inestimable value of silence. Today Hollywood creates productions which are 80, 70, even 60 per cent talking; they will soon arrive at 50 and 40. Some day there will be a real talking film."

GEORGES DE PORTO-RICHE, whose death at the age of eighty-one was mourned by all who knew his work, was a dramatist who belonged peculiarly to his native land. His plays were so popular with his countrymen that three of them — *Amoureuse, Le Passé,* and *Le Vieil Homme*—are in the current repertory of the Comédie Française. Yet no translator has successfully brought him to the theatres of other lands. Nor has he even been played in French by French actors sojourning abroad. French audiences have found in him, however, poetry and wisdom and truth. In his *Théâtre d'amour,* a published collection of his plays that includes the three named above, *l'Infidèle,* and *La chance de Françoise* lie such revelations of the hearts of men and women as only a great and understanding artist could achieve. Recognized by France as one of her immortals, as a truly great interpreter of human love, he cannot long fail of recognition in other countries.

The fortieth theatrical season of the Berlin Volksbühne began on September first with a celebration that included the production of Hauptmann's *The Weavers,* (the first of the great plays with the mass as protagonist, and probably still the greatest), with new settings by Karl Heinz Martin.

George Kaufman, author, director, actor as he appears in Once In a Lifetime.

•

Reports from several apparently authentic sources state that Charles B. Cochran has arranged for Gordon Craig to come to London to present a series of plays in the new Phoenix Theatre. Mr. Craig, it is understood, will be given the opportunity to put into practice his unique ideas on modern stagecraft and direction.

FALL WINDS

Broadway in Review

By JOHN HUTCHENS

IT needed the first anniversary of *Strictly Dishonorable,* that slight but expert and enduring comedy, to act as a reminder as September progressed, that early Autumn has already come, and with it not a single thoroughly good and balanced play. If one remembers the trio of full-fledged plays (the others were *It's a Wise Child* and *The Commodore Marries*) that opened the last season, then plainly this year has not started on the road to what it should be. There has been Kenyon Nicholson's *Torch Song,* then a pause; and after that only a collection of random items and fleeting moments, set without substance or apology in the Broadway theatres. Exclusive of the mistakes that are gone and well forgotten, there are left only nine dramas and melodramas, and in them some bright or homely talk, some scenes staged with a swift effectiveness, some honest character creations that stand out from the dim backgrounds that contained them.

From eight of these nine one goes back to *Torch Song.* It has for so long been the fine practice of its producer, Arthur Hopkins, to start his schedule with interesting theatre that one is accustomed to think the season not really started until his first offering has been housed at the Plymouth. In the Fall of 1924 he presented *What Price Glory,* and successively, since 1926, he has begun with *Deep River, Burlesque, Machinal* and *The Commodore Marries*—uneven in quality, but each outstanding for the introduction of a new author, a departure in production, or some keen perception of fresh talent brought to a theatre that needs it. This time, with Mr. Nicholson's *Torch Song,* Mr. Hopkins began with no experimental play, nor did he rely upon an untried playwright. Mr. Nicholson, with *The Barker* of carnival memory, had already found a secure place among American dramatists who write in terms of character learned out of experience and observation.

It happens that Mr. Nicholson's play is in several respects weak.

Mr. Gilhooley, Frank Elser's dramatization of Liam O'Flaherty's novel, gives Helen Hayes and Arthur Sinclair ample opportunity to demonstrate that they are among the most distinguished of modern players.

Philip Gough's costume designs for the ballet, *The Masque of the Red Death* (based on the Edgar Allen Poe story), are a feature of the new London revue, *Charlot's Masquerade*. The main color scheme included many shades of green and blue. The dancers were clad in black and gold and silver and the figure of Death was robed in flame color.

But Mr. Hopkins has braced it with a production which, not pretending to hide structural errors, does give it a definite artistic integrity. The sublimation of sex in religion is not a new theme in the American theatre—it was used with particular effect in *Rain,* for instance—and in *Torch Song* it remains more sound than the playwright's execution. A young salesman in love with a Cincinnati cabaret singer deserts her to make an advantageous marriage with the daughter of his employer. When he next meets the singer in the lobby of a small town hotel she has joined the Salvation Army, attempting in a religious ecstasy to forget her love. Having persuaded him to give up a drinking party with another salesman and two girls of the village, she sets about to win him to the faith, only to be overcome by her old passion, vaguely confused in her new found religion. She surrenders herself, and, held strictly to the logic of its theme, the play ends in that electric moment of shame and realization. In another act and a half Mr. Nicholson adds the wry irony of the boy's attempt to send her back to her faith, and of her return through love of a Salvation Army worker who is sketched into the play for that purpose without sufficient preparation. That conclusion, whose suddenness must make it seem tricky and false, works against what is finely bitter in *Torch Song;* it is out of tune with the sardonic detail of Mr. Nicholson's writing and of Cleon Throckmorton's drab, dramatic settings. But in its entirety the play is superior to its weaknesses, made so chiefly by Mr. Nicholson's ability to set down, with shrewd humor and selection, the Mid-West speech and with it to give entity and importance to half a dozen commonplace people. His writing is of the quickening, sensitive sort that you recognize as true, amplified by acting that comes half way to meet it. The one role that is self-consciously written is also self-consciously played by Mayo Methot, as the singer and Salvationist. . . . She can not swing solid blocks of emotional speech—*tirades,* they are—into the fluency of what is otherwise a realistic play. Generally speaking, the range that Mr. Hopkins allows his actors, his regard for their fundamental intelligence, finds itself justified by Reed Brown, Hal K. Dawson and a uniformly good cast. But most of all, it is Guy Kibbee whose role and acting give to the play its final authentic tone, its effect of the difference between the honest idiom and the wisecracking paraphrase of it. In the part of Cass Wheeler, veteran traveling salesman, Mr. Kibbee is making his first appearance on the Broadway

stage. That in itself would not ordinarily be important, but Mr. Kibbee's performance has a larger significance. He arrives on Broadway after twenty years of trouping through the theatres of the land, yet he comes to the New York stage with all of the virtues, and none of the mannered faults, of the character actor trained in stock. He sets a self-assured pace; he delivers a drunken speech from a window to an imaginary audience in the street, and you see him pointing his laughs and timing them with the wisdom of an audience-wise vaudevillian, allowing himself none of the easy tricks that cheapen and betray comedy as over-anxious.

David Belasco, as is his annual custom, raised the curtain of his theatre early in August, this time upon a comedy entitled *Dancing Partner*. And again, as in years past, the interest was on the side of Mr. Belasco's contribution as producer and director rather than on the play. If one makes that distinction, it is because Mr. Belasco himself has so long and carefully invited it. The leading virtuoso among the American theatre's naturalists, he has his record of vivid productions, of plays less vivid, and again of trifles whipped up into a momentary theatrical importance. It is his gift to make a good or even a fair play better, but in *Dancing Partner* he was without a foundation to build upon, and the result is Mr. Belasco's method seen at its worst advantage. The comedy, adapted from the Hungarian by Frederic and Fanny Hatton, is merely the story of a young roué who, disguised as a gigolo and failing to seduce a young heiress, falls pleasantly in love with her amid the customary blandishments of a happy ending. It is without wit or narrative interest. But its setting is Parisian and, by the stage's standards, "aristocratic," and immediately you see what an opportunity is Mr. Belasco's. An opening banquet scene is scrupulous in its depiction of food, of many colored liqueurs, of clothes befitting the stations of its men and women. Incidental music, timed to the niceties of mood and situation, follows the plot from its opening cynical atmosphere to another of straight romance and a final air of semi-suspense. The performance, too, has an exactness that Mr. Belasco can instil into any set of actors who are amenable to his step-by-step direction: Lynne Overman, Charlotte Granville, Henry Stephenson and Irene Purcell are cast again to type: the roué, the matriarch, the old nobleman, the ingenue—how many times have we not all seen them in those characters? They speak clearly and move naturally—Mr. Belasco's players always do that—and their effect is

that of competence if not spontaneity. They do not mar the picture. But it is a cross-section scene of an airplane, winging its way through the night, that brings the false emphasis to its climax. There is no doubt of verisimilitude in this scene. The plane tilts and whirs, it takes off and lands convincingly, as clouds and fields rush by. "Blacked out" on all sides, it is lighted adroitly and would frame the actors admirably in their setting had they any importance of their own to project. They have none. The fact is that you are watching an airplane and not a play, and of the two it is the toy that stays in your mind. You may grant its triumph as a spectacle; but assuredly one does not go to the playhouse to wonder how a thing is done!

Mr. Belasco's spectacle, in spite of its failure, is obviously the work of a craftsman who knows the producer's theatre. Three other current plays represent no less typically the actor-playwright's point of view. In Ivor Novello's *Symphony in Two Flats,* Albert Hackett's and Frances Goodrich's *Up Pops the Devil* and Frank Craven's *That's Gratitude,* the way has been prepared for that bond with his audience that every player cherishes and aims to achieve. Of the three plays the latter two seek only to entertain, while Mr. Novello's is an ambitious attempt to evoke within the limits of a single production more responses than one evening in the theatre can comfortably hold. *Symphony in Two Flats,* in which the author stars at the head of a company brought from London, is in reality two plays in one, their scenes performed alternately and with no discernible relationship. On the Floor Above are a composer, his wife and a friend. On the Floor Below, an addle-pated widow, her susceptible daughter, an elderly suitor and a young Amazon who paints. Prelude, prologue, scenes subtitled *andante, pizzicato, lento*—Mr. Novello is at pains to orchestrate his *tour de force* in the musical terms analagous to the development of its moods. One story is complete, that of the Floor Above and the composer who, having gone temporarily blind in composing a symphony for a prize contest, is encouraged to believe that he has won, only to learn the truth as he hears the winning symphony by radio; who suspects his wife and friend of infidelity, and is reunited to her in a final declaration of their necessity to each other. This on the Floor Above, while on the Floor Below the girl paints ludicrously and swings lustily from gymnasium bars, and the widow wins the elderly suitor from her daughter, all in a vaudeville dissonance. . . . Here

is formlessness, confusing and without subtlety or irony; nor is it authentically stylized as fantasy or comedy. It is, instead, an actor's anthology of many theatrical moments, a gallery of stage pictures set apart and realized briefly for whatever tenderness or truth or simple farce is in them. Mr. Novello, in providing such a harvest for himself, Lilian Braithwaite and Benita Hume, has been less wise than prodigal. There are moments in his scenes with Miss Hume of touching, confidential charm and the rare intimacy that sees a play move on wordlessly—an actor's personal triumph. Miss Braithwaite's caricatures are uproarious, decisive, and as desperate as though she had only the time allotted to a turn in a music hall to put her act across. But these are only moments, after all, and they are undisciplined. The intimate passages, prolonged, lapse into poses and easy ventures into pathos; the caricature, overdone, achieves the boredom of all repetition.

In their lighter vein, *Up Pops the Devil* and *That's Gratitude* succeed more artfully in communicating with an audience. The former, Mr. Hackett's and Miss Goodrich's comedy of two of Saturday's children in Greenwich Village, means precisely nothing as a play; you are not convinced that its young hero is a frustrated writer, or any kind of a writer; nor are you moved to feel anything approaching a human interest in a story of young love divided and brought together again by that aged device, the unborn child. But lacking ulterior pretensions, excellent dialogue may make a passable play good theatre, as it does both in *Up Pops the Devil* and *That's Gratitude*. Mr. Hackett and Miss Goodrich, catching the careless swing and banter of any downtown apartment with a skylight and a wood burning fireplace, write an actor's play, rippling and alive, though it is gone from the mind with the fall of the last curtain. Similarly, Mr. Craven, whose gentle understanding reached a clear, fine quality in *The First Year* ten seasons ago, writes, acts and directs a piece carpentered to character playing. A family in Hutchinson, Kansas: an alcoholic, bombastic father, a suspicious mother, a daughter who longs for New York—all recognizable, all waiting to be shaped into a pattern not too true to be deadly, not too stereotyped to lose the native drollery that lurks there. In each case, the author-actor recedes as a playwright, turning his stage over to the players to make what they will of it. They do not surprise you, they flash no comment from within. But they establish points of character which give out the warmth of a thing well done.

It was otherwise with Bayard Veiller's latest play, *That's the Woman,* in which the author of *The Trial of Mary Dugan* tried craftily to go beyond the pure melodrama of that expert court room play but failed. In a form wherein character is important, but certainly less so than mere ingenuity, he wavered between them. A man charged with murder refuses to make use of the honest alibi that would save him because it would destroy the reputation of the woman he loves. The outline was as stilted and unpromising as that, and immediately the author went to work, with a relish vastly greater than his problem, to motivate the woman toward the social sacrifices that will save her lover. Great melodramas have indeed been built on a foundation of psychological distortions, but not on this superficial, detective story method that Mr. Veiller pursued. He built a vast structure of little twists and turns, of delays and small surprises, all moving toward a result long foreseen. The shell of melodrama was there, and all its decorations—Mr. Veiller does them admirably. He knows that a moment of plot must be lucid, because audiences can not easily turn back when the moment has gone; he is frank in courting as unanimous a response as possible from twelve hundred souls who fill a playhouse; his dialogue is neat and crisp as legal testimony. But all of this was only a pretty ornament to a play that had no expectations. We saw in *Rope's End* last year the strength of a plot that moves toward a secret which the audience shares from the beginning. Mr. Veiller, however, only simulated the secret. You watched, but you knew you were waiting for nothing; and, waiting, saw how ineffective must be the attempt of even a competent cast to create character when character is secondary. Mr. Veiller knows that those who people a melodrama need be no more credible than the events of their plot. Nevertheless, he turned over his play to A. E. Anson, impersonating the popular notion of a criminal attorney, and Mr. Anson worked at a detailed, honest portrait. He shuffled and soliloquized and lapsed into dramatic silences, a shrewd old man; he seemed constantly on the verge of a worthy situation that might grow out of such a well developed personality. The situation did not appear, and Mr. Veiller can only be thought to believe that drama and melodrama are distinguished by no more than a light or a heavy touch. The theory was fatal in a medium so straightforward.

But the melodramatic theatre has many ramifications, and two examples of them—*Insult* and *The Up and Up*—lead respectively

into fields of romantic acting and atmospheric realism. Time obviously has altered the effect that Jan Fabricius meant his play to have, and the injustice of discrimination against the half-caste in the Dutch East Indies can offer us no impressive social meaning. Like *Magda,* it has about it the shadow of an earnest propaganda; very unlike the Shaw and Ibsen theme plays, it is no greater than its problem. The handsome lieutenant, the beautiful and sympathetic woman who loved him but could never have married him, the superior officer who represents officialdom in all its callous brutality. The lieutenant, his blood tainted by old native alliances, is goaded by the officer to revolt against Dutch tyranny, is sentenced to death and executed. The absence of any but an abstract feeling toward the conditions of the play forces it to stand or fall as theatre, and the underscoring that follows is disastrous. The pivotal point of injustice toward the half-caste is, accordingly, labelled with the tags of rueful romance. The strutting insolence of the stuffed-shirt major, the loyalty of a helpless but of course lovely lady, the ill-concealed high temper of the young lieutenant! Leslie Perrins' performance, so curiously full of archaic routine, follows the pattern, first with an ingratiating suaveness, then with the masculine reserve that always heightens what is taken for an inner struggle, finally with the despairing gestures of the man who is doomed, but brave about it. It breathes of an elocution that is now all but gone from our stage—writing that is ringing and declamatory, acting that puts hand to brow as if to say, "It is a far, far better thing that I do now. . . ." Thus the stilted formulae so reminiscent of another day, from which it is a long journey to the nervous realism of those current plays which seize upon and fiercely capitalize the novelty of a new milieu. As comedy, *The Up and Up,* by Eva Kay Flint and Martha Madison, is shoddy stuff, leaning doggedly upon comic types and the glib lingo of the world that follows the race horses. But just as Miss Flint's and Miss Madison's mystery play, *Subway Express,* was saved last season by lively direction, *The Up and Up* is whipped into life, if only for an act, by Howard Lindsay's stagecraft. The setting is the phone room of a "bookie's" office where, as bets are being taken over a dozen phones, the police break in on a raid. From the beginning of the act the scene has been carefully paced by the ringing of the telephones; the detached calm, amid a gathering excitement, of Curly, the chief, played by Pat O'Brien. In a moment the stage is in turmoil, voices rise to a

staccato barrage, and then suddenly the mysterious routine of a police raid is over. I would guess that no twenty consecutive lines of the scene are clear in the sense of being recognizable; but it is a remarkable instance, held down to the right proportions, of how abstract visual and vocal rhythm can carry one scene to melodramatic effectiveness.

. . . And now there should be final evidence that the war play is, *per se,* no longer assured of a sentimental or reminiscent interest apart from its strictly theatrical values. The best of them, *What Price Glory* and *Journey's End,* set apart aspects of the war and vitalized them, or enlarged them into the realm of all human experience. The others have only emphasized their weakness further by going to the war as a setting or, at the most, as a source of routine plot. The result is the sort of languor that pervaded Hugh Stange's *The Long Road,* a triangle soundly thought out, then ploddingly executed. Mr. Stange, as his tragedy *Veneer* last season proved, has a gift for naturalistic dialogue in the sympathetic manner. One does not belittle it. It is friendly, passive, a good tool in any playwright's equipment. Thus, the trusting doctor who leaves his wife and goes to war, discovering only in a trench hospital the man who had possessed his wife, is at the centre of potentially striking drama. But Mr. Stange, writing carefully, with a manifest sincerity, has only brought the drama down to the weak side of pathos, and Otto Kruger, a pliable actor, plays the role to the last inflection of a garrulous, puzzled banality. Between them they arrive at a type of naturalism which, without selection, and deliberate in avoiding imaginative implications, arrives at a portrait that is quiet, complete—and hopelessly static.

PANORAMA

From the Alps Toward England

By Ashley Dukes

A STONE'S throw eastward beyond the jagged line of this Alpine horizon, the eighth Salzburg Festival has just come to an end (September, 1930). It is generally agreed to have been stronger musically and weaker theatrically than any since the beginning of the Festival series. Some theatrical weakness was inevitable from the list of plays, which included hardy perennials in Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann,* Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe,* and Goldoni's *Diener Zweier Herren,* all cast more or less in the authentic Reinhardt mould, and only one single experiment in Somerset Maugham's *Viktoria,* which could scarcely be called very adventurous since it had often been played successfully in Berlin and Vienna. A visitor unfamiliar with the Middle-European stage might perhaps be curious to see the production of such an English light comedy, or interested in the surprising intellectual homage paid by solemn Germans to English triflers since the time of Oscar Wilde; but I can imagine no other reason that would inspire an English or American playgoer with a wish to see *Viktoria* at Salzburg. Maugham is a witty thoughtful writer, and his dramatic irony is sometimes first-rate; but it is rather puerile to associate him with Goldoni and Schiller (not to say the unknown religious author of *Everyman*) at a dramatic festival.

Still, better Maugham than Shaw for such an occasion. Had Reinhardt seized the obvious chance of showing the foreign tourist world his recent German version of *The Apple Cart,* there would indeed have been reason to despair of Salzburg's future. At least the Herr Professor is above that sort of front-page opportunism. He gives glittering parties at Leopoldskron, he is capable of presenting Lady Diana Manners in *The Miracle,* but he does not stoop to feature the piece of the intellectual hour as the set-piece of his festival display. He likes Maugham's style (as who does not?) and if he presents *Viktoria* it is because he finds it a good subject. Certainly German actors become more and more adept in handling the comedy of manners, whether English or French.

Meanwhile a responsible German paper prints an interview with Shaw concerning Reinhardt's methods of production and the claims of the "creative director" as they affect the theatre generally. The treatment of *Der Kaiser von Amerika* (otherwise *The Apple Cart*) is the text of a very typical pronouncement. Shaw's loyalty to his translator Siegfried Trebitsch fails him for once, and he expresses strong dislike for the change of title, which he considers a needless perversion. But whose fault can that have been? Shaw and his translator between them were at liberty to withdraw the play if they disliked Reinhardt's choice of title. They allowed the production to go forward, and they must accept the consequences. Again, the author cannot abide hearing that the German version plays for no more than two and a half hours, even with German verbs and inflexions thrown in. He perceives that an hour of dialogue at least must have been foully and treasonably cut (which was in fact the case). But did not Trebitsch, as vicar of Shaw in Germany, consent to this mutilation of a sacred text? And were not Shaw and Trebitsch both anxious that Reinhardt should produce the play, so that they agreed to title and cuts and production and all?

Shaw goes on to grant that Reinhardt is a man of genius; but he declares "creative direction" to be nothing but rank heresy and betrayal of the dramatist. The Pitoëffs also come in for their share of rebuke, because their conception of *Saint Joan* was by no means the author's. And then comes an interesting hint from Shaw that the talk-film will offer the best security to the dramatist of the future, since by its mechanical means he will be able to supervise the whole production and fix his own ideas once for all. The gramophonic actors will do the rest. Once *The Apple Cart,* in a word, always *The Apple Cart,* and never *Der Kaiser von Amerika.* The thing will exist on record; it can be put in a dramatic museum if need be, as a standard production for future use.

There we are at the root of the matter, and we can trust Shaw for getting there promptly. These are just the views we should expect him to hold; they are the views that all the pure intellectuals of the theatre will hold before long. Talk-film is their logical sphere. It is plain that if Shaw had been born fifty years later, he would never have troubled to write a stage play. The prophet, of all men, must seek the widest audience. Where a book reaches at best thousands, a play already reaches hundreds of thousands; but as soon as the talk-film reaches millions, it is time for the

prophets to quit the theatre and embrace this new means of utterance. Good luck to them; and let us whisper, good riddance to us! Intellectual drama being the only form of theatre that Shaw appreciates, he declares the theatre itself to be dead or dying. Its future lies with film. Ten years hence, he says, all the playhouses will have closed their doors for good.

Not so, venerable sage, not so! We prefer your caustic prophecy to the businesslike optimism of a theatrical manager who, having something to sell, pooh-poohs his mechanical rivals and cries his own wares boldly. But we agree neither with your premises nor your conclusions. The intellectual drama is not the only form of theatre that matters; nor can it for the present be anything but an antiquated form, laying its cold restraining hand upon every youthful impulse, forcing actor and director like chained men to bear its weight of servitude.

A glance at the European theatre in general reveals always the fact that England, strongest in dramatic writing, is weakest in creative direction or for that matter in direction of any sort. Where and who are our producing directors? Basil Dean—an adroit craftsman in modern work, a man with an ear, now mostly occupied with the sound-film. Theodor Komisarjevsky—a Russian to begin with, a man with an eye, but scarcely with the compelling power to seize the imagination of a whole company of moderate actors and make them fine actors, as the good director must. Peter Godfrey—a sensitive artist, for the present too much concerned with advance and rebellion to pay the necessary heed to repose and construction. James Whale, Reginald Denham, Raymond Massey, H. K. Ayliff, A. E. Filmer—all men of parts, decidedly. Harley Granville-Barker—already a legend, thanks to fifteen years' of chosen exile from the theatre. Others there are, beside the real live Lion of Genoa—but once out of sight they are quickly out of mind. At least they do not enter distinguishably into any panoramic view of the English stage, much less the European. Creative direction—the very phrase is scarcely known in England, much less the thing it stands for on the stage of other countries. And that may reasonably be put down to the pre-eminence of Shavian thought about theatre and drama, which after being regarded as rank heresy by the critics of 1890-1910, is regarded as Biblical truth by the critics of 1910-1930.

If direction meant no more to the theatre than the personal domination of Craig or Reinhardt, Pitoëff or Meierhold, Stanis-

lavsky or Jouvet, there would be some excuse for the resistance of England (and in lesser degree America) to its control. The English especially are a hard folk to discipline, and their writers and actors show a sturdy independence. There will always be Ulstermen and born Protestants, like St. John Ervine, to ensure that not too much priestcraft shall stand between dramatist and playgoer. But if direction really means anything but purpose and aim and goal, I have yet to learn what it is. Our Anglo-Saxon theatre is drifting hither and thither. It has no clear idea of a policy even in relation to such an obvious phenomenon as sound-film or radio-television. It speaks with many voices, Shaw's and C. B. Cochran's and George Jean Nathan's definitely audible among them, and all of them contradict one another, and the theatre goes on drifting as it goes on talking for three acts at a time, and as the curtain goes on rising and falling so and so many times in an evening, from force of habit as prime impulse. The dramatists alone will never prevent it from drifting, for it is in their nature to speak with different voices and move in different ways. Some of them are like Shaw and Ben Jonson, disputatious men wanting discipline in the theatre for everybody but themselves; and others are as we may imagine most of the great Elizabethans to have been, craftsmen and stage-doormen and poets who lent their hand to theatrical creation only because they saw a building with a purpose and a policy immediately before their eyes. Nor can the actors alone prevent the theatre from drifting, for it is in their nature to build with the materials brought them by other minds, and some of them like discipline and some do not, and all must undergo it. No, look as one will, there is no one but the creative director who can give the theatre creative direction.

Another stone's throw northward beyond this Alpine horizon, the performances of the Passion Play of Oberammergau are also drawing to an end. I do not want to go there, perhaps because I was there more than twenty years ago and do not want to feel old. Already in those days the scene of Oberammergau was given over to the tourist world once in ten summers; and it was only in winter, talking across an inn table to a peasant actor of the company, that one seemed able to retrieve the primitive simplicity of the place and its people. But as far as I know Oberammergau has no playwright but the authors of the Gospels, and its play has gone on, and will go on for centuries more by the directive force of a tradition.

And not far beyond Oberammergau lies Munich, which is

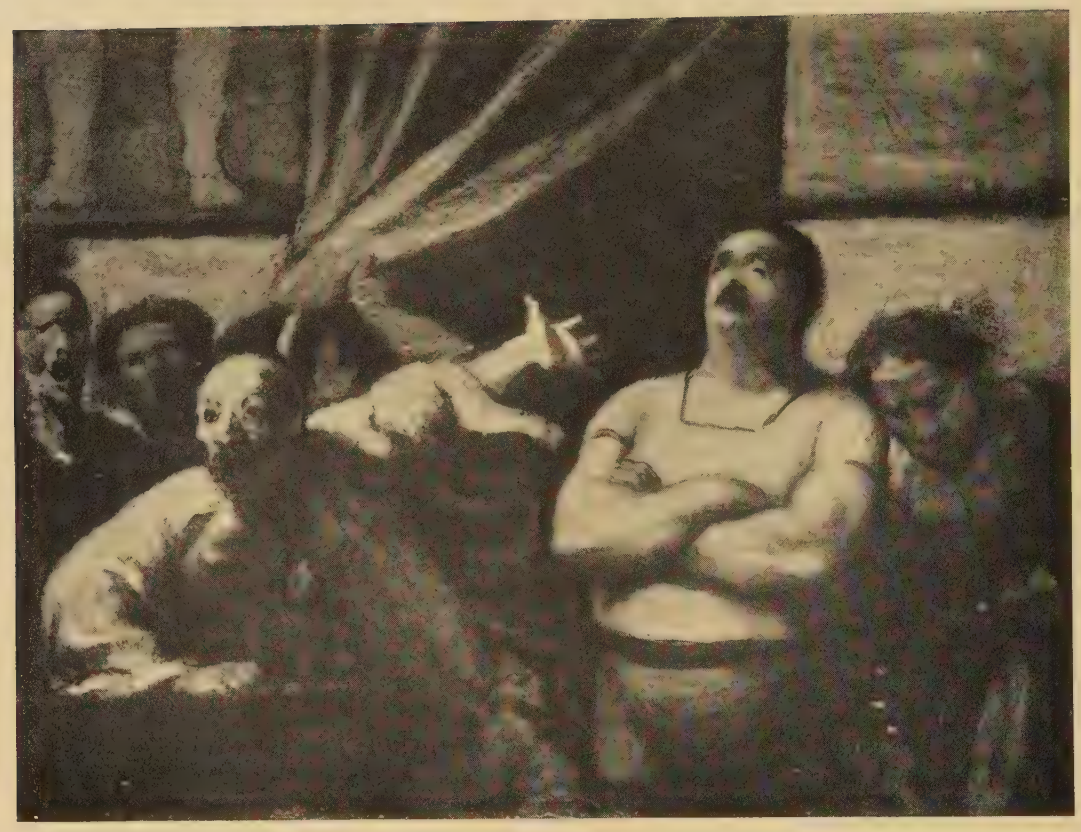
beginning to describe itself as "a theatre-city". Just that and no more—*eine Theaterstadt.* It does not claim a school of dramatists or insist upon their personality and the literary merit of their work, though I remember that Frank Wedekind was one of its citizens, and Ernst Toller and Franz Werfel are younger writers intimately connected with its life. Munich is a *Theaterstadt* because its people like going to the theatre, and because its theatre directors know how to make the best use of their stage. It is a *Theaterstadt* because creative direction stands first, and good drama and good acting naturally follow.

That was beginning to be so in the years before the War, when I spent many evenings in the Munich theatres in the quest of art and life. The beautiful rococo Residenz Theater, where Mozart's operas are given at their best, had then a director whose policy it was to give every important modern play upon his stage, irrespective of school or tendency. How he did it I cannot now imagine, but he produced a fresh piece every week throughout a long winter season from September to May, always directed and played with distinction, and each of these new productions had four or five performances in the course of repertory, irrespective of its drawing power. Some of his audience were grateful to him—especially we who were students and sat in the gallery for one mark by showing our matriculation cards. There we saw the pageant of Ibsen and Björnson and Strindberg (yes, Strindberg, twenty years before England had heard of him), Hauptmann and Wedekind, Henri Becque and Maurice Maeterlinck and D'Annunzio, Tolstoi and Gorki, and even that original phenomenon called Bernard Shaw. We saw, in fact, all the elder statesmen of the modern drama, and I think we took them for granted not as individual spirits first of all, but as players on the stage of a city especially interested to see them. At any rate that is how they now appear, in the light of dramatic history.

I shall not visit Munich this time on my homeward journey for its theatres are empty at this season save for some queer shadow of the War called *Totenmal,* and for a pious commemoration of the hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Schiller's death (the Germans do these things with painful thoroughness) by a series of all his important plays. But I know that what Munich is, thanks to successive generations of good playgoing and good direction, London or Paris or New York can be—*eine Theaterstadt,* a theatrical city.

THE DRAMA

No artist of the nineteenth century had more of an understanding feeling for the theatre as a whole with all its beauties and its grotesqueries than Honoré Daumier. He knew the performances of the music halls and of the opera. Drama, to him, existed on both sides of the footlights and he recorded it where he found it. His scenes-in-paint find an ever increasing audience. (*Neue Pinakothek, Munich*)



THE STRONG MAN

By Honoré Daumier. (*From the Daumier-Corot exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art*)

SPECTATORS IN A THEATRE

An oil painting by Honoré Daumier. (*From the October-November Daumier-Corot exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art, shown through the courtesy of Dr. Alfred Gold of Berlin*)

A Theatre Caricature

Like other great humorists Daumier was aware that pathos and the ridiculous exist side by side.

THE COMING OF IBSEN

Part II

By HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER

NO Ibsen today could become famous over one half Europe while the other half ignored him. The Paris of the Eighties was content with French drama, with, for the time being, rather poor drama very well acted. It was still a French city.

The London of the Eighties welcomed French, but few other foreign actors, and, as we have seen, was beginning to pride itself upon producing a drama of its own. Italy, as far as modern drama went, was poverty stricken. And in America it was the dark ages, though certain fine figures, native and alien, moved luminously through the void.

One of these, it should be noted—Helen Modjeska; the sound of the name can stir memories still—did actually, as early as 1883, "try out" some translation of *A Doll's House* in Louisville, Kentucky. What did the Kentucky Colonels make of it? Not very much apparently, for Modjeska played it no more.

Nor, if we are to be accurate, was England left totally without its Ibsen. Archer records "a quaint performance" in 1885 of Miss Lord's translation of the play by "an adventurous amateur club" at a hall in Argyle Street. One takes off one's hat to the adventurous amateurs across the years. Then at last, as we know, in 1889 comes Archer's own translation, produced by Charles Charrington and his wife, as adventurous an enterprise every whit. They have a hundred pounds to spend, possibly, and the courage of their convictions; and the Ibsen "movement", with much more of consequence to the English theatre, begins.[1]

Let us then take off our hats to Charles Charrington and Janet Achurch too. He was a mild Irish idealist, with a love for whatever was fine in literature and drama, but with an incapacity for

[1] The play was talked of and written about—mainly abusively, it is true—as no play had been for years. The performances were extended from seven to twenty-four. The takings were apt to be between £35 and £45 a night. Charrington only lost £70. This was not bad for an epoch-making venture in the higher drama. It would cost more to-day.

business, and too often a conscienceless recklessness in the transaction of it, which drove his friends and apologists to despair. He was not a good actor and perhaps never thought himself so, but by sheer intelligence he could often make the part more interesting than many a supposedly far better one would. He was unselfish and single-minded, and his ambitions were for his wife; and here he was justified—for in her part and on her day she could challenge comparison with any actress in Europe. I never saw her Nora. Its later scenes, apparently, were better than the earlier, the last scene of all the best. But as here is the making of the play, when what has so far seemed the play being over: "Sit down" says Nora, "we have much to talk about"—and, as has been said, modern drama begins—nothing mattered in comparison.

Having set London talking, she and Charrington disappeared on a two years tour round the world. This, one exclaims, was how business-like they were! But it was more a measure, probably, of the chances theatrical England offered to two people who had just made history for it. Later, however, besides much else, I did see her play Rita in *Little Eyolf,* and I am not likely to forget it. The tragedy of the sensual incarnate, and "They said—the crutch is floating!" perhaps the most tremendous single moment I have ever experienced in a theatre. Later still (Mrs. Theodore Wright had been the first English actress to play it) her Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts* had force and quality, even if it was too little the woman of that one tragedy, and too much a Mrs. Alving with a mission.

But self-consciousness was the bane of the Ibsen "movement". There never need have been such a thing, in its more aggravating aspects, had we only possessed—as we still do not possess!—a sensibly organised "theatre for adults" where the plays could have found a normal place. Not, for a while, *Ghosts*; here, as we said, there was bound to be trouble. Though Ibsen protested, as did his saner interpreters, that he had no social mission, that he was a poet and so to be judged, this one play had been a deliberate challenge, a dramatic challenge, at any rate. He meant, as he said, "to move some boundary stones", to stake out the drama's claim to deal frankly with the darkest tragedies of this modern life that it pretended to picture. Significantly, he cast the play into austerely classic form, and behind their mask of commonplace the characters are as heroic as any Greek could have made them. Moreover, he took particular pains, he tells us, to keep the author as chorus, or any shadow of him, out of the

scheme. Not for two years, even in the one-half Europe that acclaimed him, would any theatre face its staging. Then its challenge was won, and it became the emblem of the drama's new freedom. In England in 1891, it was given a technically private performance at the Royalty Theatre, Soho; and the wrath of God and the Police was called down by an indignant press upon author, translator, actors and everybody concerned in sullying that chaste district and England's atmosphere with this "drama of the Lock Hospital"—one of the choicer phrases flung at it. The Lock Hospital itself—did the critic observe?—happens to stand a stark sardonic reality, a few yards up the street. The Lord Chamberlain, the last of our autocrats, not merely condemned the play but later committed himself, through the mouth of his Reader, to the omniscience of "*Ghosts* will never be licensed". But when the war came some one suggested that here, for the many young men we were daily thrusting into a desperate world, might be a wholesome object lesson upon this subject, which preachers, clerical or lay, so temptation proof as they themselves must seem, find it hardest to tackle convincingly—and the play was acted "by command" to our troops in France!

A thousand pities that the English theatre of the Eighties was still too feeble of constitution to absorb the new strong wine of the Ibsen drama, for its own sake and for Ibsen's also. The plays were driven into corners where it was the harder to protect them from the hungry enthusiasms of that intellectual jackalry which hangs—a scurvy pack!—upon the skirts of all new departures.[1] "What does the thorough-going Ibsenite care", asks our Saturday Reviewer when, a little tardily, he gives his attention to *A Doll's House*, "about works of art whether they be plays, poems, or pictures. He has just one idea, Woman's Suffrage, Anti-Vivisection, or Social Purity—as the case may be". The years revenge themselves upon such gibes. Ibsen and the suffrage, at least, are free of their jackalry for ever; and "What on earth was Social Purity?" asks the bright young savage of to-day. But there were such Ibsenites, short-haired women (thirty years before the fashion) and long-haired men (some thirty years behind it) who doubtless cared little enough for the plays as plays. The worst was that a mere handful of them, self-consciously intense, could colour and infect a whole audience. One wished them to the devil. Inevitably there

[1] Needless to say, I hope, that this does not refer to the many able men and women who genuinely admired and discriminatingly praised them.

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sprang up "Ibsenite" actors too, though not many of them, and never the best. And a ridiculous fiction became current—much encouraged by others who had no use for the unwholesome stuff—that Ibsen was easy to act. He is, of course, as easy to act badly as Shakespeare and Aeschylus are, and as the silliest farce is. He was then, for highly professionalised actors, much harder to act well. And perhaps, in their hearts, they knew this. For he asked a humility of approach, and a new schooling in that packed dynamic method of his. Airs and graces avail little for the assault on our consciousness meant to be made by Mrs. Alving and Oswald, Rosmer and Rebecca; and Nora, Hialmar Ekdal and Hedda Gabler are tuned to a pathetic, a ridiculous, and, for the last, to a deadly mockery of them. There was no such snobbish nonsense about Janet Achurch, who was an able professional actress when Ibsen made her career for her and she went to school to him whole heartedly. But thereafter the stigma of Ibsenism did very much to ruin it.

There was just one antidote to Ibsenism, Ibsen himself, and full knowledge of him as the great dramatic poet which above all else he was. But this was not easily imparted; the great British public, indeed, has hardly attained it yet. The plays—the important earlier work too, *Peer Gynt, Brand* and the historical tragedies—were, thanks to Archer, mostly translated and published within four or five years. But few people will read plays, and fewer still *can* read them with much profit. The new ones and those simpler to stage were given sporadic performance. The rest stayed within their book covers, and mostly do so to this day.

The "recognised" theatre, with its actor managers—whose passing we mourn!—would have none of Ibsen.[1] This seems mere stupidity, and largely it was; they did not find much in him except to dislike. But had they thought him a god among dramatists worldly wisdom would have warned them to let him alone. The great Victorian middle class was then still at the height of its prestige (it has disintegrated since; part is now plutocratic and the other part pretty well ruined) and they and their theatre had only recently become respectable in its eyes. It was their chief paymaster and they could not afford to offend it. Besides, they were middle class themselves, and respectability was rightly dear to them. If anything seemed solid in the structure of the England of

[1] Beerbohm Tree was an honorable exception. Truly, he only ventured upon *An Enemy of the People*, and at matinées, and he "clowned" the production outrageously. But still!

that day—and most things did!—it was this prosperous and contented middle-class; and both interest and inclination brought the theatre to appeal to its tastes and to flatter its prejudices.

The drama was advancing, even daringly. Every one—Mr. Archer included—owned it. Had not Mr. Pinero just written this "new and original" play, in which he had treated the "difficult subject" of the seducer and his wife and his victim "with such remarkable delicacy"? But where was Mr. Ibsen's delicacy—over the affairs of Captain Alving, of Mr. Werle and Mrs. Ekdal? And as to Rosmer and Miss Rebecca West, if that unpleasant business was somewhat more decently handled it was only at the price of complete incomprehensibility. Nor, as with the amusingly, traditionally indelicate French author, could you square the Lord Chamberlain by any such simple devices as the turning of *maîtresse* into *fiancée* and the writing in of a shadowy chaperon, the suppressing of *cocu* and the setting of the second act in the lounge of a seaside hotel. These plays of Ibsen's were stubborn, self-respecting things. Nor were their unpleasant events palliated even by being let pass in any "atmosphere of fashionable libertinism". Quite the contrary, they persistently pictured and, as the *Saturday Review* remarked, were obviously "in a great measure written in order to satirize the detested middle-class". Why then, one's own taste apart, should one at the bidding of a small crew of noisy revolutionary intellectuals, insult one's chief patrons and quarrel with one's bread-and-butter by producing them?

No, the theatre may be excused. But what of the critics? The men whose business it was to know and welcome the new thing that was the real thing when they saw it. One blushes for them still.

The plain fact was that the coming of Ibsen struck fear into the hearts of the parents and guardians of the yet invertebrate British drama. There was the easy-going journalist crew who knew in their hearts—as the actors of the old school did, though neither could confess it—that they were incompetent to deal with him. Once grant there *was* something in the stuff, clearly it was not the sort of thing you could dispose of in a dashed-off thousand words without danger of making a fool of yourself. There were the critics proper, competent and cultured enough, but resentful of this attempt to cut through the well-baked crust of their minds. They felt, what was more, and they had readers in plenty to agree

with them, that on the whole the theatre had better not deal with vexed and vital questions, had better not "take itself too seriously".

For this was the dominant intellectual attitude towards the theatre in England, nor, perhaps, is it greatly changed to-day. It may be called the neo-Puritan attitude, and it is a more noxious, not to say a far more aggravating one than was the old uncompromising frown. A Dr. Teape would simply close the theatres if he could, as did his forefathers when they ruled the roost. He cannot, so he avoids them, and for once will speak his mind about them. And as it is the conscience of an honest man speaking, who does not fear to sound ridiculous, there will be profit in considering what he says. He could perhaps have found a better case than Hamlet's to argue. So few of us are confronted with the doubtful duty of killing our stepfathers. But it is true that people may be prompted to say and do all sorts of foolish and wicked things by the mimic spectacle of them. Doubtless many a Thorvald (and there is Thorvald's side to that business too) has repented, if only for an hour or so, that his Nora ever saw *A Doll's House*. But these will be people of crude and cramped imagination. And the question is, since life also presents tempting spectacles, are we to cultivate their imagination and give them good of it in the freedom of it, or no. The consistent Puritan says no; safety from sin is in the milk of the Word and nowhere else at all. The artist, and those that believe in the morality of art, only go a longer way to work. Incidentally, Dr. Teape, could he have suffered him at all, would have found Ibsen far more to his mind than Shakespeare!

The neo-Puritan has not much faith in art, and more than a little fear of it. He will allow us painting and sculpture (not too much of the nude), music, and literature as long as he may hold it in leading strings. But there is something less candid, something rather sinister, in his view of the theatre. To begin with he only grudgingly admits the drama to be an art at all; it is, at any rate, not a fine art.[1] He still carries in his memory an echo of his forefathers' outcry against it as a place of sin and shame. But that sort of thing, he now says, within the bounds of decorum, a pull at the the leading strings always possible, is a useful safety valve for compressed virtues. Let it alone, then, as long as it merely plays the

[1] Here I speak by the card. The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art has for years been applying for a rebate in its rates under an act which accorded this grace to institutions devoted to the Fine Arts, and the application has been rejected on the specific ground that acting was not a Fine Art—till at last, a month ago, a bench of Justices was found to say "What perfect nonsense!"

fool. It may even play the harlot a little if it will play the helot as well. But don't let it take itself too seriously.

The theatre (this is the argument), if it takes itself too seriously, if its public takes it seriously, may well become a nuisance and a danger. Is the authentic moralist—and your neo-Puritan sees himself as that—to encourage a rival whose morals may by no means be his, and set him up in such a powerful pulpit? Again, is the theatre, with its glamour, a fit place for the ventilating of vexed questions which ask calm detached discussion? Lord Morley, seeing in the average audience only a lot of intellectual children, avid for excitement, being there himself to indulge the child in him, shakes a wise head. But what is to be done? You cannot prevent your dramatists—misguided fellows!—from writing such plays. You can discourage them. You can censor them. (It was amusing, when the Censorship was on trial, to hear some Liberals, pledged to liberty under the law, justifying its exercise —and by an officer of the King's Household too!) But that only advertises forbidden fruit and stimulates appetite. Is there at last anything you *can* do except make your theatre a fit place for the posing of every sort of question which the terms of its art can compass—add, if you like, which the manners of the time allow to be discussed in a public assembly; then, by experience and the help of stern criticism, educate your audiences in the taste and judgment that will tell them whether such a question is artistically (and this means honestly) posed and resolved or no. With a high standard set him, the dramatist's art is a difficult one; you need not be afraid you will be overrun with such plays. Moreover it is one which strangely revenges itself, even upon the most accomplished dishonesty of purpose. The dramatist cannot cheat us as readily as the novelist can. For he must have human beings to interpret him, and this very reality will show up his unrealities. They may conspire with him, but since the flesh and blood medium they work in is pretty familiar to us it is not very hard, if we have a mind, to see through their falseness, and his.

We can respect a Dr. Teape even while we smile over him, but it is hard to be patient with the neo-Puritan who must confess, in the last analysis, that he prefers bad drama to good. Since Ibsen's day there have arisen the Movie and the Talkie to make, so to speak, bad drama worse, more efficiently and elaborately and alluringly worse. The European theatre, somewhat shaken by the

War, sits gazing distractedly at this striving young monster with the American accent, this amazing Benjamin of the family. What is to be done about him? As a partner he will not leave his elders much to live on; he embraces them affectionately and picks their pockets of the few talents they have left. As a rival, can they hope to compete with his prosperous democratic enterprise of making cheap what is most dear, all the art that money can buy him ground in his mill, with his binding of the whole world together in the bonds of a common vulgarity? Do I *want* to compete with him, asks the poor harassed theatre; and answers pathetically: If it weren't for the bread and butter difficulty, good heavens, no! Our neo-Puritans have now begun—a little diffidently, for a lot of capital has been invested in him, and there are Interests to offend —to shake their heads over the monster and to talk, not only of offences against morality, which they have appointed a few "men of the world" to control, but of bad taste and the degradation of English culture and things like that. They have even passed a law to enable England to bring up a monster of its own!

The remedy for every evil is innate in it. Towards what precise scheme of better and worse the costly chaos of the Cinema itself is evolving I do not pretend to know, nor—except that the coming of the Talkie has so far robbed me of some restfully amusing afternoons—very greatly to care. It is its compromising partnership and rivalry with the theatre which concerns me. Well, the antidote to bad drama is good drama, and I do not believe there is any other. Not solemn drama, nor, of necessity, serious drama, not of the Ibsen brand in particular, nor of the Shakespeare brand exclusively; but just good drama of its kind, and of pretty nearly any kind that is not quite infantile. Train it up, see fair play, and let the good stuff fight the bad for the suffrages and—if we want to talk solemnly—for the souls of the people. But the bulk of the people will still prefer the bad! It may well be so; and if that were the end of the matter, of this and of kindred matters, civilization itself would soon be throwing up the sponge. But it obviously isn't. Where the good does not win outright, the bad only ostensibly beats it by becoming not quite so bad. And the taste of the better thing imperceptibly spoils our appetite for the worse.

Such, to a degree at least, is the history of Ibsen's influence in England and of its native sequel. He gave modern drama its intellectual liberty. The theatre that would have none of him soon found

itself setting out to emulate him. The actors who had sneered at "Ibsen actors" learned a lesson from them. And the critics who had abused him began to measure plans by his standard. This is the revenge which genius takes. And while his true followers, playwrights and actors, won no popular success, and but a begrudged reputation, on their work the best work of the next generation was built; and now another generation builds diversedly on that.

The Ibsen "movement" is now of no more account except to pious historians; but his plays have their place, which, by every test, is among living drama still, and is likely for long enough to remain so. There are, we may say, two sorts of drama, that to which the theatre gives a transient life and that which gives life to the theatre. Whatever the first may bring in pleasure or profit, it is as well to recognize the difference; for in a crisis, such as the present one, it may be only the second sort, and our sense of the vital worth of it, than can pull the theatre through.

I LOOK AT THE THEATRE

By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

I AM, in regard to the theatre, one of the simple souls. While the orchestra sounds the overture, I sit with my eyes intent upon the curtain, convinced that when it rises, wonders will happen. And of course they always do happen, though they seldom turn out to be the kind of wonders that I was expecting. To find, when the curtain falls again, that my mute and unformed expectation has been completely satisfied, is very rare. But it has happened: for the first time when, a small boy of eight, I watched a Beerbohm Tree performance of *Julius Caesar* from the gallery of His Majesty's. That was my first real theatre. I had seen the curtain go up before that—to reveal Marie Lloyd as Robinson Crusoe in a pantomime. I had my own ideas of Robinson Crusoe, from Stothard's pictures in my book, and Marie Lloyd in *snow-white* furs did not correspond to them at all. But Robert Taber (I think that was his name) as Cassius and Lewis Waller as Brutus, taking their last farewell in the tent, were wholly wonderful to me. I see no reason to suppose that they would not be wonderful to me to-day.

At all events, they satisfied the deep and indefinable expectation

which filled me then, and fills me now, before the curtain rises. I come to the theatre with no theories, and with surprisingly little experience. I have never been a confirmed playgoer. The play is still to me almost as great and as singular an event as it was thirty years ago. As far as I can discover, I make exactly the same demand upon it as I made then—namely, that I should behold wonders, and that the wonders should be commensurate with the strange expectation with which I wait for them to unfold. It seems a simple and utterly uncritical demand. Yet it has seldom been satisfied: by the aforesaid *Julius Caesar,* by a matinée performance of *Othello* in which Mr. Matheson Lang was the Othello, by a performance of *The Cherry Orchard* in which Miss Edith Evans was Carlotta—I don't believe she was at all famous then, but her queer voice as Carlotta vibrates in my memory still—by a performance of some quite trivial comedy of Sacha Guitry, in which Lucien Guitry was the father coming to call upon his son's mistress. He waited for Mademoiselle to enter in the ante-room of the flat, in his overcoat and scarf, and smoked a cigarette. And, I suppose, if I were put to it, I could recall about as many more occasions when the expectation was completely fulfilled.

So simple am I that I do not really know whether it is the actors or the playwright who works the miracle. I think of the Shakespeare and the Tchekov, and conclude it must be the play; I think of Guitry, and know it must have been the actor then, if not at another time. He said nothing at all; he simply smoked a cigarette and looked, slow and exploring, round the room. What playwright, I wonder, could have given him words that would not have been futile compared with his rich silence. And with that adjective *rich* I creep a little nearer to the secret of the satisfaction I personally seek in the theatre. Whether I think of the actors or of the plays which have not disappointed my exacting expectation, both seem to have had this quality of richness. In the actor it is the same direct vibration which he sends across the footlights, and by which he establishes some obscure yet certain physical contact between himself and me. In the making of this contact the voice is of supreme importance, but it can be made without the voice. The voice of the actor who is capable of this rich contact is only the subtlest of his physical gestures, so that before he has actually spoken, if we are responsive to his presence, we are prescient also of the quality of his utterance: we know that it will come charged with a suave and

physical assurance. It will carry not the ideas and symbols of language merely, but a vital and organic emanation: the communication is immediate, vibration setting up a direct vibration, as well as mediate.

Sometimes, the actor triumphs over his author's jejune words, and makes them vehicles of his mysterious effluence; sometimes, the author uses words which positively seem to turn the actor's somewhat neutral and disembodied voice into a physical organ. The great master of this rich and animal utterance in the theatre was surely Shakespeare. If an actor can speak some of Shakespeare's lines at all—and for all I know they may be very difficult to speak —then inevitably his voice becomes a channel of immediate physical vibration. An Othello has but to say: "Put up your bright swords, or the dew will rust them . . ." and we are physically overwhelmed. Probably those apparently simple words are very difficult to utter with the same directness with which they strike the eye and the mind's ear. But I feel tolerably certain that it was no accident that the great master of sensuous and lambent dramatic speech was himself an actor all his life.

Rich, sensuous, lambent—the procession of epithets brings me nearer to defining the supreme and inimitable virtue of the theatre for me. Lambent, with a warm and fluid caress. I can be quite interested in the dialectic of Mr. Shaw; my mind is pleasurably engaged, but this temporary intellectual interest is a very bare and flimsy satisfaction compared to the total and pervasive contact of which I speak. Only when this contact is established am I deeply convinced of the reality of the dramatic action. Lacking this immediacy of contact, the action seems to me no more than a mere possibility; with it, the action is inevitable, however much my reflecting intelligence may tell me that it depends upon a sequence of accidents. Accident, once the sense of reality is thus directly established, is inevitable. My mind may assure me that there are no ghosts, but if the actor with whom I am in sensuous rapport sways to a supernatural monition, I also am swayed. To deny it would be like denying a toothache because my dentist has told me my teeth are sound.

Because this immediate and quasi-physical rapport between the actor and myself is the most mysterious and most fundamental fact of the theatre for me, I cannot help thinking that our modern attitude towards the drama is too intellectual by far. We limit its

scope to what our intelligence deems likely or possible. Because the ordinary man, we argue, does not utter himself in metre or rhythm, it is a violation of probability to make our actors speak poetry. And again our playwrights must represent only those situations which are familiar to normal contemporary experience. Whereas the truth, as it appears to me, is that the theatre is a heaven-sent instrument precisely for breaking down the closed circuit of normal experience. In the theatre the true function of speech is no longer primarily to communicate ideas, nor even emotions, but to establish a sensuous rapport—to make "feeling" (which is far deeper than emotion) contagious. Therefore the playwright should be able to disregard entirely all standards of realistic probability in creating an utterance for his characters, or in devising symbolic events or situations by which the latent "feeling" may be expressed, and communicated.

It may be said that to disregard realistic probability in speech and happening is also to disregard the expectation of the audience. In a certain superficial sense that is true enough. The audience in a modern theatre has its own conventional expectation: its intelligible curiosity to see how its betters behave and to look behind closed doors, also its pathetic desire for the illusion of mingling in a world immune from sordid domestic cares. It definitely wants its drama to be, within limits, realistic, and to be able to believe that dramatic action is the kind of thing that certainly might, and probably does, happen in a higher section of society. I am not such an idealist as to suppose that a playwright who took the full advantage of his magnificent freedom, and who was lucky enough to find actors willing to experiment with their own half-forgotten powers, would have a rapt and repeated audience. Quite certainly, he would make mistakes while exploring the possibility of his medium. But I do believe that such experiment would eventually arouse an adequate response. My own experience tells me that I enter the theatre without any definite expectation at all; my expectation is devouring, but not definite; so indefinite, indeed, that it has cost me unusual pains to analyse it even so far as I have done here. Once establish the vital and quasi-physical rapport, and I am infinitely suggestible—a pipe for the playwright and the actor to sound what stop they please. And in this I do not believe I am peculiar; my sole peculiarity is that I cannot help wondering why someone does not take full advantage of my own tremendous plas-

ticity. Why, when I am laid open to receive almost any vibration, should I be confined again within the narrow circuit of that which I intellectually *know*? I am tired of known ideas, of known emotions; and the theatre which almost always retorts them upon me leaves me with a sense of waste and sterility. Why should it not begin to arouse my deepest feeling into awareness and activity: to bring the unknown me to some sort of life, and send me away in the repose of a life-enrichment?

As things are, it appears to be almost pure accident whether or not anything of the kind occurs. When it occurs in a modern play it is due to the sheer physical potency of the actor—scarcely ever to the language or substance of the drama itself. I think that I detect some deliberate effort towards the drama I imagine in the plays of Miss Susan Glaspell and Mr. Eugene O'Neill; I find it in the late D. H. Lawrence's *David*. And that play of Lawrence's is the more novel because it makes no effort to be substantially new. It is the old, primeval stories which contain the greatest potency of stirring our feelings, as distinct from our mere facile emotions. In regard to our modern intellectual hypertrophy they are almost pre-mental. And the pre-mental experience out of which they originally arose still exists, at least, as potentiality, within us. That perhaps the highest and certainly the most neglected function of the drama should be to re-kindle that atavistic feeling into glowing life is neither paradoxical nor unexpected. It is the pre-mental element in *Hamlet* and *Lear,* the persistence of the non-rational and non-rationalizable mythos in their drama, which acts at least equally with Shakespeare's poetic genius to stir us with "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls."

I suppose that an unkind person would suggest that I am asking that the drama should become religious again. If they would accept the meaning that I give to the word *religion,* I might be content, for indeed it does seem to me that the drama is the most perfect instrument for communicating that deeper awareness of life, of its precariousness and its significance, its destinies and disasters, which is what I understand by the religious sense. Perhaps it is only a confession of my own ineradicable naivety that I still believe that the instrument could be, at least on occasion, more fully and more appropriately used than it is to-day. I think that the realistic convention when it becomes a law is positively stifling to the theatre. It is not that I have the faintest objection to realistic plays: if

Tchekov is a realist, I certainly owe to realism some of the most satisfying moments I have had in the theatre. But that the theatre should become solely realistic strikes me as a stupid self-frustration, in which we acquiesce (so far as I can see) merely through the tyranny of custom. People go to the theatre to be amused, we are told till we are tired of hearing it. It is true, in the main. And for my own part I would rather go to the theatre to be amused than to be edified. Nevertheless, I think that the best object in going to the theatre is neither to be amused nor to be edified, but to be spell-bound: and I do not take it patiently that the most potent and enduring spells should be rejected simply because they do not fit the conception of itself which is entertained by an excessively mechanised and mentally conscious society. Let the theatre hold the mirror up to nature, by all means, but don't let it rigidly make up its mind beforehand that only certain reflections are to be recognised. It is the unrecognisable reflections that are probably the most significant.

THE MAID OF DOM REMY

Elisabeth Bergner as Shaw's St. Joan. *Max Reinhardt, Twenty-five Years of the German Theatre* includes, in its picture record of the director's achievement, the four character portraits reproduced here.

THE MACHINIST

Emil Jannings as Streckman in the Reinhardt production of Hauptmann's *Rose Bernd*.

THE WASH-WOMAN

Hilde Wangel as Frau Wolffen in Hauptmann's *Der Biberpelz.*

JULIUS CAESAR

Werner Krauss in the name part of Shakespeare's tragedy, produced by Reinhardt.

SQUARING THE TRIANGLE

Music in Soviet Russia

By NIKOLAI SOKOLOFF

CAUGHT in a seething crowd which gave no quarter, I was propelled into the Beethoven Hall on an upper story of the Moscow Opera House during an intermission. There was to be a *conferenzia*—beloved word—with the composer of the new opera we were hearing that night, who was to answer any questions and to explain the story. No printed librettos were to be had.

My expectations were high. It was my initiation to the Moscow opera, and the first act had been vitally absorbing, the orchestra superb. Now would be revealed some facets of the public mind and I should have an insight into the "new" Russians' opinion on music—a priceless opportunity. A silence fell over the motley gathering which filled the room to its scarlet-brocaded walls. The chairman was recounting the plot of *Zagmuk,* opera by Alexander Krein. A pause.

"Questions?"

The questions came, with some hesitation at first, gradually gathering momentum and confidence.

"Comrade, why are there no librettos?"

"It was a good enough play as it was. Why should there be any music written, anyway?"

"We could not hear the words at all, comrade. Why not?"

"Why did the composer not give the chorus some good revolutionary songs to sing? Here was a fine chance and he missed it completely."

"We are tired of operas about people who have been dead for centuries. Can we not have something modern?"

And, finally,

"We could not understand the music, comrade."

Even Russian audiences are not always so articulate. Only new operas invite similar verbal criticism, and a serious paper shortage had precipitated that particular expression to the surface momen-

tarily, and had answered the first of the questions.

"What is accomplished by such a conference?" I asked Krein in the next intermission, having been profoundly impressed by his patience, his humility in the face of such misunderstanding. His answer to the crowd had been that of an artist: I must express myself and what I feel in my music; if I have not succeeded, I may be wrong and I am very sorry; but the opera was written the way I felt it.

"We must close the gap between the masses and the arts", he told me. "We must make them feel that music is for them, the people, for their enjoyment, their benefit."

"But did they enjoy it?" I argued. "Did it not pass them by entirely?"

"Sometimes there are intelligent questions", he replied serenely.

* * *

To understand what has happened to music in Russia you must know the modern conditions under which music is composed and played. Music now shares the fate of every other art, every science, every industry in Russia. It is government-managed; the organizations for making music are completely controlled and financed by the government. It must serve a common purpose with every human facility and all inspiration: that purpose being the furtherance of the social ideal.

In their attempt to remodel their world closer to their heart's desire, the Russians have not forgotten the importance of *"kultura"*. You do not have to search minutely in any printed mouthpiece of the Soviet Government—and every newspaper is just that—to find the word *"iskoostva"*, the arts. It screams at you from hundreds of editorials, all variations and amplifications of Lenin's words:

"The arts belong to the people. They should penetrate through the length and breadth of the working masses. They should embrace the feeling, thought and will of the masses, and should uplift them."

Most salient of all is the plea for a "new" art, one which shall be conceived by the workers, developed by them to full and rich expression, satisfactory to everybody. Perhaps they will succeed with the theatre, always Russia's prime sport. The drama of human life is most easily portrayed from behind the footlights, with living protagonists, and the play is even better as a spokesman for an idea than the written word. The new cinema holds the germs of success. Literature has its rightful niche in the new scheme. Pictorial art

has found a vivid channel outside of the museum in the posters which are so full of color, so startlingly original.

And music?

For a healthy musical life in any country three factors are needed, indisputably. There must be composers, interpreters and listeners, each contributing fairly equal strength and support to keep the triangle from going askew. Granted these three in any satisfactory proportion, what happens when the triangle is squared, and a fourth side introduced in the form of a set purpose: to express the revolution and the meaning of socialized life?

Can such an intangible thing as music be thus "socialized"? On the surface in Russia today, a favorable answer seems possible. Sold-out houses are common at the operas, especially when some workers' club or an important committee buys every seat for the inevitable conference, to be followed by a performance. Each musical unit in the country, opera, symphony or ensemble, regularly visits the *"rayonnes"*, or districts in its neighborhood, for the pleasure and education of the workers there. Conservatories are running full blast, with classes for the sons and daughters of the proletariat and for the workers themselves. Countless rubles are spent on the Moscow Opera, which is directly connected with the central government in the Kremlin by its Communist administrator, a woman. Other operas have their yearly budgets from the government—surprisingly large sums. The Moscow "Sophil" (the Soviet Philharmonic—one of those abbreviations with which the Russians are so fascinated) gives its concerts in Moscow; Leningrad's orchestra happens to own its own building and seems firmly entrenched; the "Persymphans", that famous "conductorless" orchestra, functions in Moscow; and there are summer symphony concerts at Baku on the Caspian Sea, where the orchestra is made up of men from all over the country.

It is a remarkable layout, on the face of things, with so much post-revolution distress to be overcome; when there is so much hardship in every-day living; and when so much individual self-denial is necessary in order that the government may export all resources in exchange for the gold which is to build the industrial program.

The heritage of the past—Russia's glamorous musical and theatrical history—has been retained from necessity. The wonderful old operas of Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff still hold their own in every opera house repertoire. They are "tolerated" in spite of their out-of-date sentiments about kings and queens, the church

and fairy-tales. There are enough cases where kings met defeat and slaves were freed to permit them to go on the boards without any alteration, and in such gorgeous trappings that you would imagine the proletariat mouth to be watering with envy.

What new artistic expression could take the place of *Boris Godounoff* with its passion, its incomparable music, and the reiteration of the *motif* of despair which is in the Russian soul yet, in spite of thirteen years of the will to eradicate it? Such an opera as *Prorive,* one of the most representative of the modern revolutionary music dramas?

In *Prorive,* the composer Pototsky keeps the spirit of the revolution alive in the usual manner: Red victors over White villains; the young Communist hero a model of propriety, set against the foil of White cruelty and licentiousness. Often, as in Kiev where I heard this opera, the characters of the villains are so complex and interesting that the best singing-actors are delegated to these roles. Only one singer, the Communist's mother in the Kiev production of *Prorive,* was equal in artistry and voice to the dissolute White general, the precious dandy and the gloomy young lieutenant who ended as a suicide after ruthlessly shooting two peasant women in cold blood. There was a great deal of shooting and running about raising dust in the last scene, which nullified somewhat the previous effect of splendid direction, compactness and acting.

Then over the final flush of Bolshevik triumph fell a billowing red curtain which was immediately raised to show the much-magnified features of Lenin. This inevitable denouement always aroused in me the same feeling of embarrassment which I used to experience when George M. Cohan got himself in a cul-de-sac and waved his way out with the American flag.

What is to supplant the charming fairy tale operas of Rimsky-Korsakoff when the new art flowers? Not Prokofieff's fantasy, *The Love of the Three Oranges,* although it is a miracle of sheer delight and whimsy as it is produced in Moscow. For it is not very new, and a certain Sunday morning audience was pitifully meagre and noticeably dispirited.

Could it be the celebrated and popular ballet, *The Red Poppy,* which has enjoyed more than two hundred full houses in Moscow alone? If it is to be *The Red Poppy* or others of its calibre, one may well entertain fears for the future of music, and the dance as well, in Russia. With a silly sentimental libretto, ballets and solos

which are remnants out of the rag-bag of vaudeville and dancing academy technique, and Glière's commissioned music, decidedly not his best, its only modernity is the introduction of the red flag.

Krein has handled the required consummation with more skill and delicacy in *Zagmuk,* a third representative production of the squared triangle. When a band of slaves make one last attempt to free themselves from a harsh Babylonian tyranny and meet only ignominious defeat, their leader cries out with his dying breath: "In centuries to come, we will be vindicated!"

Then from the battlefield rise ghostly stone walls, each section engraved with the symbols of great historical events which confirmed his prophecy, the parapet crowned with the date of the Bolshevik supremacy. It is architecturally impressive, not inartistic, and not incongruous. Krein's music, too, has strength and dramatic force, and much of it is capable of being heard by itself, unlike Pototsky's, which could not easily be divorced from the stage. The composer of *Zagmuk* is an important man. He is one good earnest for the artistic future of the Russian opera.

Opera is hardly likely to die in Russia anyway. Its physical organization is too secure; its drama and colorful pageantry have too firm a hold on the Russian nature, which has always adored "play-acting". But how do the new audiences respond now to the opera, these workers with their hundreds of shaved heads, their simple blouses, their drab colors? What do they think of it all as they sit in the spacious royal box, in the crimson and gold which is the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre? How fares their side of the musical square?

After each opera performance, excellent or indifferent, new or old, I watched eagerly for the demonstration which reflects in some measure an audience's approval. Pre-revolution audiences in Russia were famous round the world for their reception of music and their homage to artists. I remember them as a child, and many artists have since told me of the love and warmth which showered upon them from Russian opera and concert halls.

The new people are lethargic. Why is it that they seem unwilling to give the reflex of applause except in rare cases? Are they tired of *Boris*? Bored with their new purpose when it is constantly flung in their teeth so that they are never allowed to forget it, even after an hour or two of relaxation and vicarious adventure?

To be brought up sharply out of a make-believe world, however

realistic it may be, must come as a shock to any nervous system. Perhaps they have been shocked thus too often, and the stimulus has weakened.

Certainly there was not even a modicum of excitement for the climax of *Prorive*. *The Red Poppy* itself suffered an indifferent fate at the hands of its mammoth audience. *Zagmuk* met misunderstanding. Only three times did I ever witness generous ovations in the Moscow Opera, and only once was this accorded to a musical triumph in the purest sense. When the chorus in Moussorgsky's *Khovantschina* sang as the climax of an act, it literally "stopped the show". The two other outbursts of enthusiasm were for personal successes, and both occurred in that same opera. Mme. Obukova, one of the most magnificent artists in Russia today, could even have boasted a personal claque, though no doubt she shared the annoyance of the audience at the two effeminate young men who persisted in applauding every time she appeared on the stage, whether anyone else was singing or not. M. Raizin's imposing presence and remarkable singing as the old priest won for him the third passionate response. The fact that he was a distinguished guest from the Leningrad opera also had something to do with it. Everything else was greeted with polite attention and tepid appreciation. The theatre does not participate in this atmosphere of anti-climax. But in the theatre one can "hear the words", and there is no music to misunderstand.

To be sure, the Russian people have no infallible guide to tell them through their morning papers that last night's performance was good or bad. Newspaper columns are not open to the accounts of "Mme. M.'s faulty pitch", "Conductor B.'s unfaithful tempi" and "Mlle. R.'s adequate pianism". Even if space could be spared from more important considerations, no pay check would reward the reviewer. Consequently there is a dearth of musical criticism—some might rise and call Russia blessed for that—and the few musicologists who do function write serious tracts about music itself and lecture and teach at the universities or conservatories for their daily bread.

Perhaps through being thrown on their own resources Russian audiences may develop a very real and independent critical faculty. Who knows? They are not slow to speak their mind and not afraid to ask questions, as the *Zagmuk* conference shows. Even if such outspokenness takes a seemingly stupid direction, it is at least honest.

But it shows little appreciation for the art of music. The almost

universal boredom with music reveals an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, both with the old musical expressions and the new "purposeful" achievement. There is already a murmur in Russia which may some day swell to a roar and result in a very real danger for some forms of music as we know them now.

"The old music is bourgeois", runs this whisper. "Musicians are not real workers, after all. What do they produce?"

What is the cause of this disquietude? There are simple reasons for it. Music cannot be crammed down anyone's throat, whether by the argument that it is necessary for the soul, or whether as a disguise for a pill to promote the patient's moral welfare and make him more amiable in his relations to his neighbor. There is no law which can make a man love music. The desire to listen and to understand, with the heart or with the head, as you please, must be there first, however latent. A man may be inspired and uplifted, he knows not why, by listening to music, true enough. But the possibility of appreciation was inherent in that man. And when music is made the excuse or the vehicle for anything else except itself, it sinks to the level of an "occasion", and will be appreciated only as such. The Russians are not the only people, by any means, to gloss over those facts in trying to "make their country musical". Perhaps, after all, the accusation of "bourgeois", the most scathing epithet in Soviet Russia, is not so far wrong in one sense. Certain kinds of music can have but a limited appeal. Naturally, the broader the opportunities given to hear such music and to become familiar with it, the greater chance of an increasing number of music-lovers. That is the law of average in operation.

So it is with difficulty that the Russians are "squaring the triangle" and trying to include music in their industrialization jubilee. Composers cannot be ground into being between the wheels of machinery; artists, to play and sing their music, cannot be turned out wholesale from factories; sympathetic audiences are not to be had for the manufacturing. All three may be nurtured but not made to order.

The Russians today, while grasping the old, are straining for the new and forcing the triangle out of shape. Until they realize the futility of imposing governmental pressure on the integrity of creator, performer and listener, there can be no new artistic fulfillment.

THE BROADCAST PLAY

By VAL GIELGUD

THE broadcast play, quite naturally, considering its tender years, is the Cinderella of the drama. Until comparatively recently it was the custom among intelligent people either to express bland ignorance—and even a certain lack of interest—when confronted with the statement that plays were occasionally broadcast, or else to affirm flatly, as if with a spontaneous reaction, that the thing was a contradiction in terms and couldn't be done; if it was being done, it should not be done. And that was all there was to be said about it. However, the thing has been done, and is being done with an increasing enthusiasm, and we hope ability on the part of its sponsors, for audiences correspondingly increasing in numbers and in critical interest. And when, within the last month, we find, prominent in the correspondence columns of an English weekly, a letter criticizing a broadcast production of Shakespeare, we can surely claim that the broadcast play has passed the first and most depressing stage of development—the stage of being entirely ignored.

With the recognition that the broadcast play has a definite entity of its own, marches the realization that the broadcast play must equally possess a technique of its own. What is this technique, and how does it differ from the technique of the normal theatre—or indeed, from that of the abnormal, or should it be super-normal, theatre which houses the talking picture and all that that implies?

There is a curious affinity in development between the drama of the screen and projector and the drama of the microphone and loud speaker. When films first passed beyond the stage of "stunt" and moving photographs of celebrities, the sponsors of the first film drama could think of nothing better to do than to photograph scenes from stage plays. Similarly, broadcast drama began by bringing scenes from stage plays in front of the microphone and hoping for the best. Needless to say, the best was not achieved. Various people who had never been to the theatre in their lives, or who could only go to the theatre when they came into some sort

of windfall, were delighted at this second-best substitute. But for the most part the listening audiences rather implied that this was all very well, but if they craved for the purgation of their emotions through pity and terror, they preferred to go to the theatre and do it properly, rather than put up with an inferior substitute. And as long as this hypothesis persisted—that the broadcast play was and must remain some sort of substitute—so long was it condemned to a position of aesthetic contempt and practical inferiority.

Technique may be defined as the application to a medium of artistic expression of the practical possibilities and limitations inherent in the medium in question. Or, in other words, it is the A B C of craftsmanship inseparable from the practice of an art. With this in mind, it is probably only too true that the reader may find what follows to be almost intolerably obvious; but it was not obvious at the time. Let us take the film parallel a little farther. During the period which ended about a year ago—for practical purposes a period of about thirty years—the silent film had succeeded in building up a technique entirely peculiar to itself, based upon the possibilities and limitations of the camera. Yet immediately the talking picture was invented, so far from obvious was it to film producers that the talkie meant merely elaboration of the silent film technique, that they promptly threw away the greater part of their experience, and fell back into the original sin of making talking pictures of stage plays. Only after committing innumerable artistic crimes, and producing innumerable bad talking pictures, are the dictators of the film industry showing any signs of realizing the alphabet of talkie technique, which is so many leagues removed from that of the ordinary stage.

Now it is clear that the most essential and all pervading factor in the make-up of the broadcast play is a limiting one; that it can appeal only to one sense—the ear—and that particular sense is by no means the most important or the best trained of the five that normal human beings possess. The silent film, of course, appealed only to a single sense—the eye. But I do not think that it is going too far to say that civilized mankind, at any rate, is far more dependent upon its eyes than upon its ears. It uses its eyes far more frequently, and reacts from visual impressions far more swiftly and keenly than from any others. There is hardly anyone who does not immediately react to the word "blind." Blindness is always a tragedy; deafness is only too often dismissed simply as something

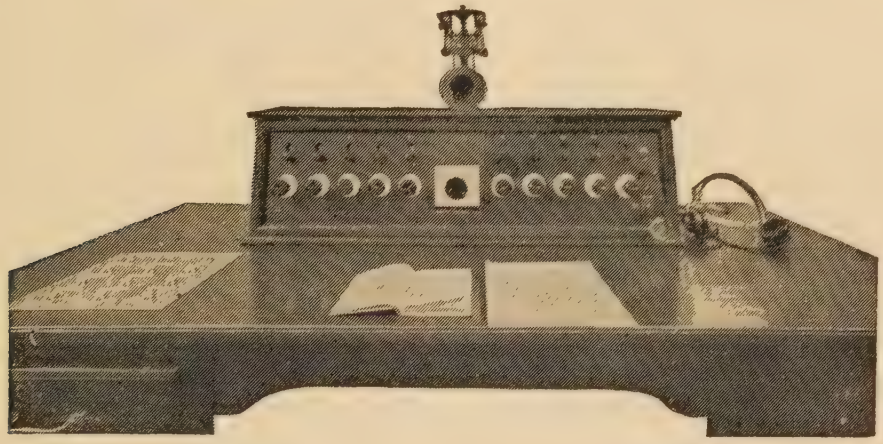
rather tiresome. Most people seem to be able to imagine what it is to be blind far more easily than they could dream of what it means to be deaf.

In the production and writing of a broadcast play one is bound to be handicapped by starting with a very definite demand upon the intelligence of one's audience. One demands that one's audience shall, for the period of the play, put away their eyes, and react, emotionally or intellectually as the case may be, from the oral angle only. In the first play ever specially written for the microphone, Mr. Richard Hughes, with a very typical ingenuity, solved the problem by placing his characters in a coal-mine disaster. His characters were in the dark, their eyes were useless to them. It was, therefore, easy enough for the audience to listen and react without feeling all the time that they were missing something by not being able to see. But for all its ingenuity, this was only a makeshift. It is not possible to write many plays in which black darkness is an ingredient, and it is necessary therefore to find methods by which to prove that the radio play has compensating advantages and compensating possibilities to make up for its initial demand that an audience accustomed to use its eyes should temporarily forgo that use. These compensating advantages may not be immediately apparent, but most people who make a habit of going to the theatre at regular intervals have grown so accustomed to its limitations, so accustomed to making allowances for its imperfections, the necessary limitations of the three walls, the curtain, the intervals for scene changing and so forth, that they hardly regard them as limitations at all.

The absence of visuality must, therefore, from the point of view of the radio playwright, producer and audience, be regarded as a parallel to the three walls incidental to all theatrical productions—as a handicap, but not as an entirely destructive handicap. It would be as sensible to say that it is impossible to present drama adequately on the stage because it is not possible to put a play on to the stage except with scenery conventionalized after one fashion or another, as to affirm that to broadcast drama is impossible because the microphone does not convey sight as well as speech.

Let us consider for a moment some of the compensating advantages. Most important of all, the broadcast play is not limited by what are commonly called the "unities." It is true that the theatre has made, and is making strenuous attempts to escape from

the tyranny of the unities of time and space; but scenery, however simple, has to be shifted, and costumes have to be changed, and lapses of time must imply definite interruptions either by means of the falling of the curtain, or the black-out, so that in the theatre the audience is being continually dragged back from absorption in the traffic of the stage to acute realization of its surroundings, of other members of the audience, who may be eating chocolates, or slumbering, or merely coughing—in fact, to a thousand incidental distractions. In the broadcast play, so long as the playwright can, by means of his writing, maintain the lucid development of his plot and his characterization—the latter, particularly in present



The Dramatic Control Panel. The ten central knobs along the panel mix and control the volume of sound from the various studios. The small switches on the left control the lights from which the different studios take their cues marking when they shall begin; and the telephone attachment over the top is the means by which, during rehearsal only, the producer speaks to his invisible and dispersed cast. The central knob can control either the left group or the right group of studios en bloc. (Courtesy Radio Times, London)

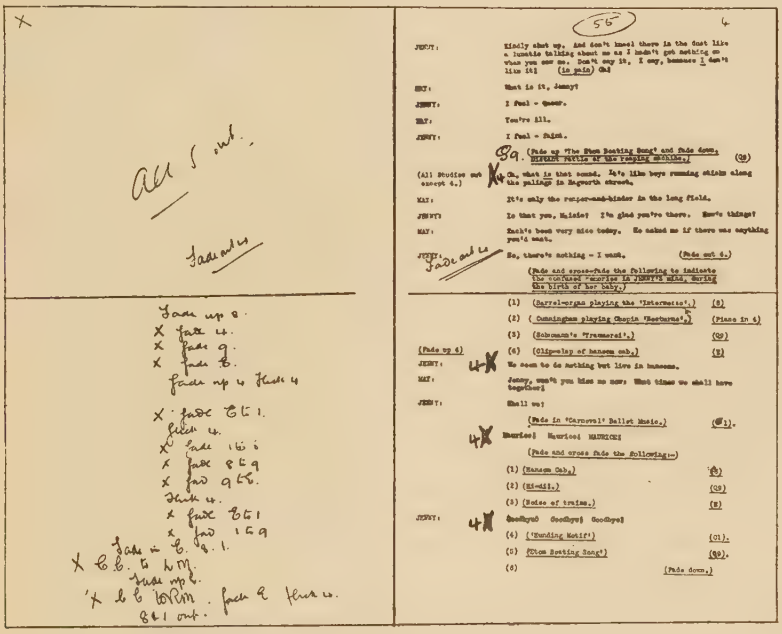
conditions of broadcast acting, no easy task—he is relatively given a free hand. The Dramatic Control Panel, governing as it does under its single direction a multiplication of studios, enables him to move at will, both in time and space, as simply as if he were travelling on the fabled magic carpet, and to take his audience with him. Further, the second most important point, by means of this multiple studio device, he can use music to a degree quite impossible in the ordinary theatre. It is obvious that when sound alone is the medium of dramatic expression, to limit that sound to words alone would be to ignore that category of sound to which most

human ears are in some degree attuned. For most of us are accustomed to listen to music, and certainly a very large number of us achieve a definite dramatically emotional reaction from music. Music, then, to the broadcast play is no unconsidered and inconsiderable handmaid. The conventional tiresome overture and dreary entr'acte are, or at any rate, should be, replaced in the broadcast play by music either specially written, or so admirably chosen as to form an integral part of the complete dramatic structure. Needless to say, this is an ideal to date hardly achieved in any specific case, if we except Tyrone Guthrie's *Squirrel's Cage,* and on quite another plane, Mr. Marvell's adaptation of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's *Carnival.*

Mr. Guthrie and Mr. L. du Garde Peach are, without doubt, up to the present, the most successful practitioners of this new craft. Both of these writers seem to have little difficulty in finding dramatic construction entirely independent of visuality, and both of them have mastered one exceedingly important point, which is almost entirely neglected by most would-be writers for the radio. This point is the realization that a radio play, to be effective and satisfying, must contain a definite sound rhythm. It is not enough for its story, or its thought, to be laid out and composed dramatically. It must have a sound construction as definite and as satisfying as a musical symphony. This is not an attempt to blur the problem by a phraseology not altogether untainted by that common amongst "highbrows." Mr. du Garde Peach's admitted "shocker", *Ingredient X,* subscribed to the axiom I have mentioned as faithfully as did Mr. Guthrie's *Squirrel's Cage,* which was frankly an attempt to express psychology in terms of the microphone, and which very largely succeeded in doing so. What it is important to remember is that the radio audience is not merely susceptible to what is expressed in definite sentences, but that its interest has to be consistently held by some form of oral sound pattern, otherwise the radio dramatist is likely to fall back into the unhappy position of being considered a second-best substitute for the more normal type of theatrical entertainment.

I do not for a moment suggest that the whole duty and business of radio drama is to develop the ideal radio-play. Such development is perhaps the most interesting part of the business, but there have been many admirable plays written for the theatre, which modern conditions deprive of performance for various reasons, and

which, in some cases, would seem to have been written by authors with a prophetic eye on the invention of the microphone. The Greek plays, the Elizabethan drama, and, to take a solitary modern instance, *Beggar on Horseback,* provide astonishing examples of plays that can be adequately broadcast with a minimum of adaptation. But while this is true, I must enter a caveat against the view of Mr. Compton Mackenzie, whose main grievance against the broadcast play is that it does not promote or develop great acting, and that the reason for this is that there has so far been no broad-



A page from the script of Mr. Marvell's adaptation of Compton Mackenzie's Carnival *with the producer's notes against it on the other side of the page, from which the man on the panel actually worked. (Courtesy Radio Times, London)*

cast of *La Dame aux Camélias* or *The School for Scandal.* In this case one feels that the remedy is worse than the disease. To conclude a catalogue of what must have seemed a large number of obvious and platitudinous statements, it is perhaps hardly necessary to say that, as in the case of all drama, whether it come from the stage, the talkie studio, or the microphone, its fundamental basis is, and must be, good writing. No amount of mechanical ingenuity, no knowledge or comprehension of sound pattern—not even a good situation—can compensate for poor writing; and in the

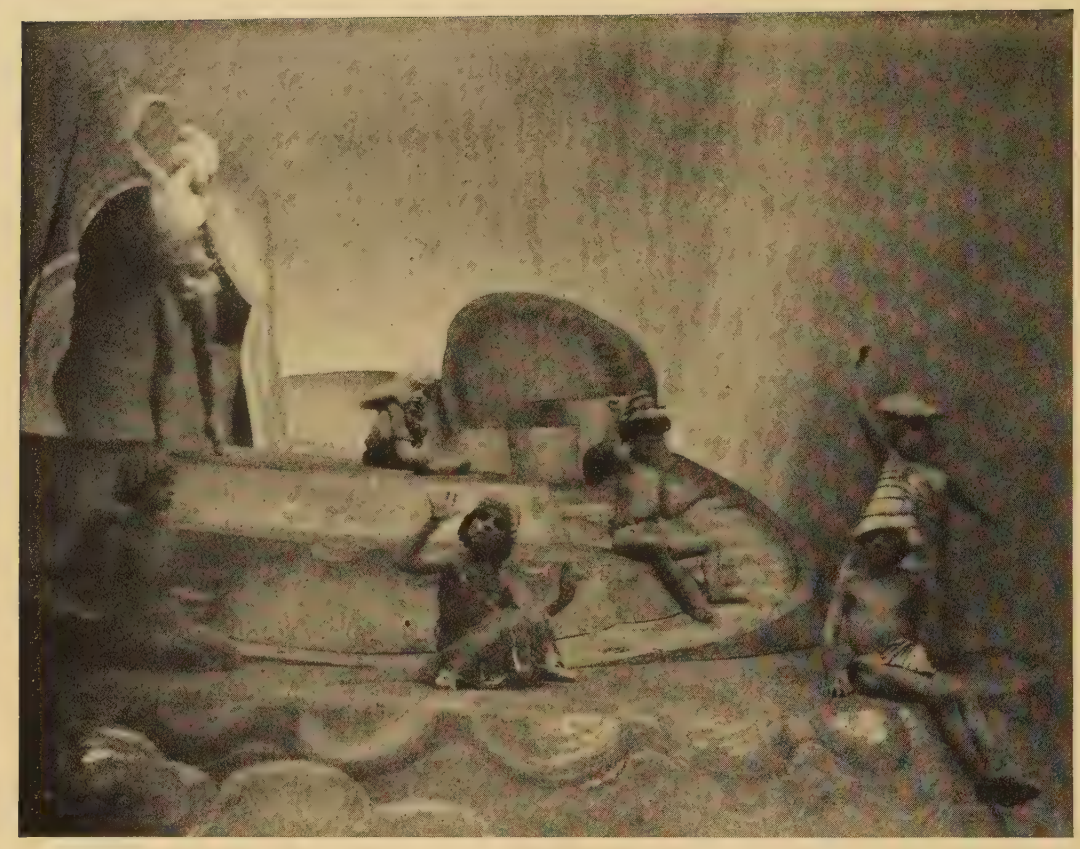
case of a radio play a high standard of writing is the more necessary because it cannot be balanced by luxurious appointments in the shape of scenery or dresses, and because the radio audience, split up as it is into individual units by their firesides, each one of whom is completely isolated, is far more immediately critical than the massed units of the audience of the theatre or the cinema, subject to every type of emotional mob-reaction. The handling of multiple studios, comprehension of sound-pattern, discretion in and knowledge of the use of music, the realization of visual limitation and oral freedom—all these things make up the technique; but as long as they are used for their own sake, or if too much emphasis is placed upon these things at the expense of the writing and the telling of the story, the broadcast play will suffer. Unfortunately, the technique is not yet crystallized and the experimental stage is not yet over. But nothing is more important than the realization that, with regard to technique, it should, and must, remain the servant of the broadcast play, and never be allowed for one instant to become its master.

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of Sea, for an Acre of barren ground.

Four scenes from last season's production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* by the children of the King-Coit School, New York, a performance so successful that it is to be repeated this year. (*Photographs by Delight Weston*)

STEPHANO: *Moone-calfe, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a good Moone-calfe.*

FERDINAND: *The verie instant that I saw you, did*
My heart flie to your service.



ARIEL: *Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,*
Under the blossom that hangs on the Bow.

The performances of the King-Coit School have come to be recognized as among the most distinguished productions of each season. Among the dramas enacted by the little players have been *Aucassin and Nicolete, Nala and Damayanti, Kai Khosru, The Image of Artemis,* and *The Golden Cage.* Last year's performance of *The Tempest* attracted wide attention and critical approbation. It will be seen again during the Christmas holidays. In April an earlier success, *Aucassin and Nicolete,* produced about six years ago, will be revived.

THREE CHINESE FOLK-DRAMAS

Translated by KWEI CHEN

BEYOND the north gate of the District Seat of Tinghsien, in North China, there are, in a few villages, flooded rice-fields. It is said that these fields were first opened when Su Ting-po, poet-statesman of the Sung Dynasty, 960-1276 A.D., was magistrate in this district. To encourage the cultivation of the newly introduced cereal by the farmers of the villages, the magistrate composed songs to be sung at the planting; and these songs, or lyric dialogues, came to be known as "Rice-Sprouting Songs," a name which they still bear. It is said that they are to be found nowhere else in China. As time passed these songs, or chants, developed into a type of folk-drama, which has now become traditional in the district. They are danced or acted to the accompaniment of instrumental music; the performers are gaily costumed; and, as in the Mediaeval European drama with which they were contemporary, the female rôles are carried by men.

Apart from comparative and critical interests the following plays, translated by Professor Kwei Chen, are of intrinsic interest as drama. Two of them are capital comedy while the third possesses a simple and direct pathos that cannot miss its effect, whether for its immediate situation, or, better, as the symbol of a universal. Undoubtedly for an Occidental audience the plays should be rendered with every stylization that can be in taste, that is, as being essentially for us exotic; and it is with this in view that I have made some directional suggestions. HARTLEY ALEXANDER, *Editor.*

I. PRINCELY FORTUNE

ACTOR, *speaking as Prologue:*

Little Fish, not yet become Dragon,
Fallen into a pond on a mountain-side!
[Born into a Family of Kings,
Now living under a thatch roof.
Hungry, I eat coarse corn;
Thirsty, I drink tasteless tea.
Such is my life! such my Fate!
I, a Prince, am shedding tears, grieving,
Wishing that I never were born Son of a King!
I remember when I was very young,
How once both the Queen and the King
Conspired to kill me—for they desired

To give their throne to my younger brother.
They tied me to a stake and were about to kill me,
When there came a God invisible to all but me,
Carrying me afar, I knew not whither,
Heretofore, I knew not how to walk;
Now I was forced to walk—one *li*—another—another . . .
Heretofore, I knew no hardship;
Now I was compelled to endure every hardship—one mountain—another—another . . .
I wept; I wailed; I wailed, I wept . . .
Then I arrived at a village.
There by the lakeside sat an old man:
Heirless, he made me to be his heir.
With this old man, I lack nothing;
I have good food daily, clothing for all seasons;]*

ACTOR, *in rôle:*
I am in school.
I began my schooling by learning—
The One Hundred Surnames;
Then the Four Books;
Then the Five Classics.
My teacher asked me to write compositions:
The first that I wrote was good;
The second one barely passed;
In the third I misspelled several words
And was rewarded with forty strokes of the rod!

Immediately afterwards I fainted and dreamed dreams.
In the first dream I heard a God speak;
In the second I saw a Flowerlike Maiden;
In the third I went to hunt birds.
In rapture I awoke; but I am now very sad,
Seeing that all have vanished, as in dreams.

ACTOR, *continuing:*
But, let me see! What is this!
In my pockets I find clay bullets!
Upon my shoulder is a precious bow-sling!
Dreams become real by will of the Gods! . . .
Slowly I walk outside the school, thinking:
Today I do nothing but hunt birds in the wildwood!

ACTRESS, *entering, musingly:*
I am Miu Mei, flowerlike, happy of heart.
Dressing up, beautifying myself,
I am going out to see the flowers.
A comb of yellow fragrant wood is in my hand:
With it I comb my cocoon-smooth black hair.
I step forth from my Embroidery Room;
I go to see the flowers in the Garden.

* In the original the section in brackets is partly spoken, partly sung.

Ah, here blooms Eternal Youth, there Goodman Lotus,
All about are Peonies and Roses!
Now I come to the Fish Pond—Redfish, Greenfish, Goldfish,
In pairs they swim merrily, merrily! . . .
But, ah! I, Miu Mei, am only sixteen!
I am alone.

ACTOR, *perceiving the Maiden:*
What is here? Oh, beauty!
In the Garden she sits, on the rock beside the Pond.
She looks no more than sixteen! she can be no more!
On her head her hair is ink-black, tied by a red silken band;
Her face is painted with the famous Kiangnan paint;
Her lips are reddened with the rouge of Suchou;
From her ears hang a pair of golden rings, lanternlike;
Her jacket is of the red silk, her skirt of the glossy black!

I desire to tease her, but am puzzled how to go about it.
Ah, there is a bird calling out, challenging me!
From my pocket I take a clay-bullet, and straightaway shoot . . .
Lo, the bird falls in the Garden, just before the lovely maid.

ACTRESS: I was looking at the flowers and the fishes.
Suddenly a bird fell from a tree, here at my feet.
What omen does this foretell? . . .

Poor birdie, what can be the cause of your death?
There is no eagle in the air above . . .
I saw no cat on the tree . . .
Unfortunate birdling, let me bury you . . .
Ugh! it is a big-beaked white-collar mountain crow!

ACTRESS, *perceiving the Youth:*
Oh, yonder, outside the garden hedge, a handsome young man!
What shall I do?
If I throw to him the bird he has killed he will laugh at me . . .
Let me pretend to be ignorant of the bird.
Slowly I stroll beside the garden pond.

ACTOR, *approaching:*
My bird fell inside the Garden.
I must have it. Let me enter.
He retrieves the bird.
Ah, now I have the bird, I must run out again.
I run.

ACTRESS: Stop, Young Sir!
You are neither blind nor insane!
How dare you intrude upon my garden?
If you have not stolen the willow, you Thief!
You have stolen a glimpse of me!
If you dare move one step more
I shall call out and you will be caught!

Yes, and sent to Court! and locked up—
After you have received forty lashes!

But—if you will remain with me for a while,
I will be gentle with you . . . So, first let me ask
What can have caused you to intrude upon my solitude?
Your choice, Young Sir! Friend or Thief?

ACTOR, *to audience:*
Oh, to remain is my heart's desire!
Yet I say to her, playfully:

To actress:
Noble Young Lady, to the Court of Justice
Let us go together, as you wish.
For surely not I only am to be disgraced!

ACTRESS: You are no stupid!—from your way of talking;
Though you did seem to me too handsome to be clever.
Come, tell me about yourself and your family:
In which District is your home? in which Province?
What is your father's name? is your mother living?

ACTOR: My home is not far. It is in Huang Koo-Yuan.
My father is Squire Wang, and my mother is a Buddhist.

ACTRESS: Tell me how many brothers you have;
And are you the youngest—or which?

ACTOR: I have neither an elder brother nor a younger.
I am alone—only son to my father.

ACTRESS: You have married the daughter of which family?

ACTOR: Born homely and being solitary, I am unmarried.
No family wishes to give their daughter to so homely a man.

ACTRESS: So you are not yet married?
Well, I am not yet betrothed.
This year I am sixteen years old.
I have a word to say to you:
You will not think me overbold?

ACTOR: Whatever you wish, pray say it unreservedly.
Your humble servant is most willing to listen!

ACTRESS: I wish to marry you. Would you marry me?

ACTOR: What is your wish is my desire!
Let us ask a Go-between to speak to our Parents.

ACTRESS: You are willing and I am willing:
Pray, where is the need of a Go-between?

ACTOR: This open place is not suitable for intimate talk.

ACTRESS: Let us go sit in the bower.

ACTOR: Permit me to walk ahead.

ACTRESS, *following, to the audience:*
Love is sweet; lovers know not shame.
A maid of sixteen follows her beau.

ACTOR, *leading the dance:*
Happy walk is swiftest.
ACTRESS, *in rôle:*
Here we are in the bower.
ACTOR: Out of the soil I make a calf as sacrifice.
ACTRESS: Flowers take the place of incense.
ACTOR: Having no paper we burn the petals of flowers.
ACTRESS: Having no music we chant our wedding chant.
ACTOR: Let us both kneel and ask Heaven to bear witness.
ACTRESS: This year I am just sixteen.
ACTOR: I am eighteen,—two years old than you.
ACTRESS: I am two years the younger. So you will protect me.
ACTOR: Had I known that to hunt birds would bring me a wife,
I should never have lingered moping in the corners of a school!
ACTRESS: Had I known that flower-gazing would bring me a husband
I should not so long have confined myself to my chamber!
ACTOR: Alas, I must go! Tomorrow I come again.
ACTRESS: Fever take you, if you don't come tomorrow!
ACTOR: I kotow to you, and bid you Good-bye!
ACTRESS: I kotow to you, and bid you Till-we-meet-again!
ACTOR, *to the audience:*
Hurriedly I shall jump over the garden hedge.
ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Joyously I shall return to my Embroidery Chamber.
ACTOR, *to Maiden:*
If your Parents ask you?
ACTRESS: I will die before I confess.
Till we meet again!
ACTOR: Good-bye! *Exeunt.*

II. MEETING AT THE WELL

ACTOR, *as Prologue:*
Carrying my books I go to school;
I bow to Confucius before leaving it.
In the distance I see my home village:
In my garden there is a Wuntung Tree
Waiting for the Phoenix to build her nest.
Behind the embroidered screen sit beautiful girls;
From the schoolroom will come forth a Poet Laureate.
I am Wei Kwei-yuan.
Weary of studying I take a walk. [*Exit*]
ACTOR, *re-entering as Narrator:*
While Kwei-yuan is at home,
Suddenly something comes to his mind.
Lazily he leaves his seat, and slowly walks forth.
Swiftly he passes through the streets;

Soon he arrives at the school-house;
He enters the schoolroom; it is night.
He lights a lamp to study;
But he cannot study, thinking of a Fair One.
Every page he turns he reads only her name;
Every page he turns he sees only her face.
Ah, he had better go to sleep:
He will meet her in dreamland!

ACTRESS, *entering:*
I am Lan Ju-lian,
Sent by my mother-in-law to fetch water.
The pole on my shoulder is made of the rare boxwood.
Hurriedly I hang at each end a pail
And on my back I carry a rope twelve feet long.
Slowly I walk out of the kitchen, out of the gate;
I follow the highway toward the hill, toward the well.

My husband's name is Chou Yu-tse, mine Lan Ju-lian.
He is fifty-three years of age, while I am but eighteen.
He looks like a carbuncle;
His nose is flat as a monkey's;
His mouth is big as a crocodile's;
He has an ear half of which is gone;
He has only one leg and half of it is festering;
And his short little queue is like sheep-wool.
Standing he is like a bogy;
Squatting he is like a millstone.

Toward the well I go:
One step, two steps—Lotus steps;
Three steps, four steps—Chrysanthemum steps;
Five steps, six steps—Waterlily steps;
Seven steps, eight steps—Tyrant's Lash;
Nine steps, ten steps—Ten-color Silk.
Forward nine steps; backward three.
I walk like Pearl-Hanging-on-Rolled-up-Screen;
I walk like Spread-of-Bottle-Gourdvine.
I walk to the North of the road,
I walk to the South of the road.

Around the well grow poplars and willow trees;
Around the well stand white-stone railings of Han Dynasty.
Slowly I ascend the steps to the well;
I lay aside my pole; I take the rope in hand;
I let down the pail on the hook of the rope;
I draw up the pail filled with water.
One pail of water being drawn up, I go on filling the other.
Having filled both pails, I become tired;
Perspiration dampens my clothes.
I seat myself to rest, before carrying home the water.

ACTOR, *entering, speaking as Narrator:*
From his school Kwei-yuan comes, walking, thinking.
He thinks of his dream of the night before:
He had dreamed of a beautiful sight at the Blue Bridge.
In his dream as he stood he beheld the fairest of women.
Now he has come to this place,
Looking in front, looking backward, looking right, looking left.
But nowhere is she to be found.

There, on the river bank, an old man of eighty is fishing;
Here, just below, a sweet maid of sixteen is washing clothes:
These are the usual scenes, same as of last year.
Speaking as Kwei-yuan:
But Kwei-yuan is seeking a new scene, the scene of which I dreamed last night.
Ah, where shall I find such a sight?
Onward, onward, I go.

Who is there? who is that?
A woman! a young woman! a beautiful young woman!
Her hair is cocoon-smooth, and black as ink;
It is braided with red silk;
On each side of her head she wears a fresh flower;
And a hairpin with Kingfisher-feather inlaid;
Her dress is flowered cloth, her skirt is crispy black.
She is the very woman whom I saw in my dream!
Let me go near, making a courtesy and speaking to her.

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Having bowed to return his courtesy, I ask:
To the Actor:
Has the Young Gentleman lost his way?
Or forgotten his home, charmed by Nature's beauty?

ACTOR: I have neither lost my way nor forgotten my home;
By the charm of Nature's beauty I am merely made athirst.
Will the Young Lady give me a cup of water?
I am willing to pay whatever price she may ask.

ACTRESS: Here, Young Gentleman, I offer you water free of charge.

ACTOR, *to the audience:*
The Young Gentleman rushes forward to seize the waterpail.
He pretends to drink, but stealthily gazes closely at her feet.

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Having discovered the gentle theft, the maid is irritated.
To the Actor:
You mean-hearted Young Gentleman! You look at my feet.
And you tell me that you are thirsty!

ACTOR, *to the audience:*
My thirst is of a very different kind from the ordinary!
To the Actress:
My Fair One, may I know of your family? your home village?

ACTRESS: Away, away! you mean-hearted Young Man!
You have stolen a very close glimpse of me,
And now you dare ask where my home is! . . .
My mother's home is in the rear of the Hua Shan mountains;
My mother-in-law's home is at the front.

ACTOR: Your husband's name, my Fair One, and your own?

ACTRESS: My husband's name is Chou Yu-tse, and my own Lan Ju-lian.

ACTOR: Will you tell me, my Fair One,
How old your husband is and how old you are yourself?

ACTRESS: My husband is fifty-three and I am eighteen.

ACTOR: Your husband is fifty-three while you are only eighteen?
That is what you say, my Fair One?

ACTRESS: Yes, my husband is fifty-three and I am only eighteen.

ACTOR: A wife so young and a husband so old!
How you must have suffered, my Fair One!

ACTRESS: I do not dislike my husband, though he is old.

ACTOR, *to the audience:*
Looking around and seeing no one near,
I venture to court the pretty maid.
To the Actress:
Do not be angry with me, my Fair One.
I wish to speak to you of a thing in my heart.

ACTRESS: Say it directly, Young Gentleman;
I take no offence from good and sincere talk.

ACTOR: I have a mind to ask you to marry me, Fair One.
Yes, or No? But pray do not be angry with me.

ACTRESS: Your impertinence has made me really angry!
You had better ask your own sister to marry you!

ACTOR: Your scolding serves only to provoke me, my Fair One.
Pray listen to a story I am to tell you.

ACTRESS: I shall listen if your story is good.

ACTOR: Once on a time Fang Li-hua the Beautiful
Was married by her bad uncle to ugly Yang.
On the battlefield she fought with a handsome young General.
She fell so desperately in love—
That she killed her ugly old husband and married her beloved!

ACTRESS: A good woman does not marry twice.

ACTOR: You are so very young, my Fair One,—
Ah, how few are the days that a flower is blooming-red!

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Not being a stone, my heart is moved by him.
Oh, what should I think? What should I do?

ACTOR: Let me tell you about my family, my Fair One.
I am a gentleman's son, living east of the river.
My name is Wei Kwei-yuan, heir to an estate

Of several hundred acres, with a mansion of several hundred rooms.
In winter there is no lack of fur; in summer, of gauze.
When you smoke there is a servant to light your pipe;
When you drink a maid always brings you pure water.
Why should you not marry me?
Why waste yourself on a disgusting old man?

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Ah, I have been won over by him! I am convinced;
Though I have been married by my parents to the ugly Chou,
I cannot but love this young handsome Gentleman.
Obey Love I must! *To the Actor:* Young Sir, I will marry you.

ACTOR: How lovely! How delightful!
To yonder Blue Bridge you and I together go,
There to take our betrothal oath before Heaven.
Let me lead.

ACTRESS: I follow you.

ACTOR: Here we are on the Blue Bridge.
I, Wei Kwei-yuan, kneel down before Heaven.

ACTRESS: I, Lan Ju-lian, kneel with my lover.

ACTOR: I shall love you forever, my Fair One!

ACTRESS: Forever I shall love you, Young Sir!

ACTOR: We rise.

ACTRESS: I am going.

ACTOR: Wait! Give me a token to remember you by.

ACTRESS: I came out to fetch water, and brought nothing worth while.
But take this hairpin.
Hereafter when you come with this token,
Even though you are a beggar, I will not refuse you.

ACTOR, *to the audience:*
Kwei-yuan is about to leave.

ACTRESS: Wait! What will you give me to remember you by?

ACTOR: I came forth to enjoy Nature's beauty, and have nothing.
Ah, let me tear a piece from my blue gown to give you.
Hereafter when you come to me with this token,
Even though you are a servant-maid, I will open my arms wide to receive you.

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Lan Ju-lian carefully takes her lover's token.

ACTOR: Now I bid you good-bye. *Exeunt*

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
By the well is left Lan Ju-lian alone.
Her Young Gentleman is gone.
In her rôle:
I carry back with me the two pails of water,
Rejoicing that the New Day of my life is to dawn.

III. WOMAN-SONG

ACTOR, *entering as journeying:*
Since my Little Sister returned home
I have not sent her to her Mother-in-law's, across the river.
Seeking her, I go—one *li,* two *li,* three *li* . . .
Passing by four houses, five houses,
Six pavilions, seven pavilions,
Eight flowers, nine flowers, ten flowers . . .

I am Wang Su-chen.
Since I invited my Little Sister to spend a vacation with me, nine days have elapsed. Let me ask of her the exact length of the leave-of-absence her mother-in-law has permitted her.
Sister! where are you?
Ah, there she comes!

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
Hearing Brother's call, forth toward him I go, asking:
To the Actor:
Elder Brother, pray, your orders?

ACTOR: Be seated, Sister, I wish to talk to you.

ACTRESS: Thank you, Brother, I am listening.

ACTOR: For how many days did your mother-in-law say that you could remain here with me?

ACTRESS: For ten days, Brother.

ACTOR: How many days have you stayed with me already?

ACTRESS: Nine days already.

ACTOR: Little Sister, I am thinking of sending you back to your mother-in-law's home. What do you say?

ACTRESS: Really? Oh, no, Brother! . . . No, Brother! . . .

ACTOR: Sister, I am sorry, but I must.

ACTRESS: This is to kill your sister . . . Alas!
She sings: Hearing this! Hearing this!
Back to my mother-in-law
Elder-Brother sending me . . .
My tears flow incessantly,
Like swift shuttles, weaving . . .

ACTOR: Little Sister, do not grieve, do not shed tears.
Your Elder Brother is to go with you.
Now let me saddle the horse. *Exeunt*

ACTRESS, *as Narrator:*
In the front parlor the Little Maiden is left alone.
Her Elder-Brother has gone to saddle a horse.
She enters the embroidery chamber to change her dress.
The Little Maiden is changing her dress in preparation,
For leaving for her mother-in-law's home.
Putting on her new dress, wrapping up her old dresses,

Carrying her bundles, she comes again to the parlor.
There she meets her sister-in-law, her brother's wife.
She speaks to her brother's wife:

"Good-natured Sister-in-law, pray listen:
"Today my brother is sending me back to my mother-in-law,
"To my dreadful mother-in-law . . .
"When the next festival comes,
"Please, please, do not forget to invite me to your home!"

Having begged this favor of her sister-in-law
The Maiden comes to the gate, waiting for her brother.

ACTOR, *re-entering, as Narrator:*
With a saddled horse for my sister
I have come toward the gate.
There I see my sister shedding tears,
Tears like the never-ceasing swift shuttles.
Leading the horse to her, I call:
To the Actress:
Little Sister, please mount.

ACTRESS, *as Narrator:*
The Little Maiden has mounted the horse.
Her Elder-Brother is carrying her packages.
The Little Maiden rides ahead, ahead . . .

ACTOR, *also as Narrator:*
Her Elder-Brother follows, follows . . .

ACTRESS, *still as Narrator:*
The little Maiden rides through the wilderness.

ACTOR, *To the Actress:*
Tell me, tell me, O Little Sister,
Tell me what lies heavy on your heart?

ACTRESS: Good Elder Brother, your sister will unbosom her griefs to you.

Our father was Squire in this District. He promised a family in Chang-tse-pu that they should have me as daughter-in-law. Soon he died, and a day was selected to marry me into this family, as he had doomed. I thought I was going to a rich house; but instead I found a very cruel mother-in-law. Today I must return again to that house. I pray not to live, but to die soon. When your poor sister is dead, Elder Brother, you will see that her body is buried in a suitable coffin; for if my body is laid away in poor clothes and in a mean coffin, my burial will be with endless griefs . . .

ACTOR: Do not weep so, Sister! Onward we must go. I blame the Go-between Woman who lied. I blame her, I hate her! Our parents died when you and I were very young. They believed all that the Go-between Woman said, and so they consented to give you away to the family in Chang-tse-pu.

When you were eighteen years old, on a day selected for luck, you were carried to the dreadful house where you were married. Instead of a family rich with food, clothes, and dwellings, you were married only to sharp sisters-in-law and to a cruel mother-in-law.

This ill fortune was unexpected, Sister. But fortunately you are yet young, being now only nineteen. Soon the old will die, the young be married off to other houses. Then my sister will be left in peace. Then the narrow path of your life will widen into a highway, the little creek become a great river, the tender twig grow to a venerable tree.

Little Sister, you are not the first daughter-in-law. Many have known a fate more cruel than yours. Harken to a brother's advice, and do not think of death. If you die an unnatural death, your brother will not speak for you. Put up with what Heaven has assigned you, Sister . . . Onward, onward, let us go.

ACTRESS, *as Narrator:*
The little Maiden whips up her horse, to cross the bridge.

ACTOR, *as Narrator:*
Elder-Brother, Younger-Sister, both have crossed the bridge.

ACTRESS, *in her rôle:*
Sitting on horse-back, I look around.

ACTOR, *in rôle:*
Yonder, not far, is Chang-tse-pu, your mother-in-law's home.

ACTRESS, *as Narrator:*
The Little Maiden whips up her horse to enter the village.

ACTOR, *in rôle:*
Sister, here we are in front of your mother-in-law's house. Let me help you dismount.

ACTRESS: I dismount.

ACTOR: Here is your package, Sister. When you enter you must ask after your mother-in-law's health. To your sister-in-law say, How-do-you-do. Though they are unkind to you, for your part do what is right.

ACTRESS, *to the audience:*
I wish to ask my brother to come in and have some lunch, but I fear that my mother-in-law will—

ACTOR: Thank you, but I am neither hungry nor thirsty. I ought, perhaps, to go in to wish your mother-in-law good health, but since I have so often disputed with her, she can have no desire to see me. I shall go directly home. Good-bye . . . Good-bye . . . *Exit*

ACTRESS: Ah, me! In front of this cruel gate I am left alone . . . I must not stand here too long, lest I be taken for a timid daughter-in-law. I go to meet my fate.

The Play-Likers of North Carolina College at Greensboro, N. C., produce a stylized version of the 19th Century melodrama recently made famous at Hoboken, *After Dark, or Neither Maid, Wife, Nor Widow,* by Dion Boucicault, under the direction of W. R. Taylor. In interesting contrast with the picture above is the photograph of a moment from a stylized modern play, Martin Flavin's *Criminal Code*, produced by the Dallas Little Theatre, directed by Oliver Hinsdell. (*Photograph by Robert R. Miller*)

The University of Colorado has found its model Elizabethan theatre, with "cut-outs" posed as characters, a useful device for instructing students in the theatre life of Shakespeare's time. The upper picture shows the heath in *Macbeth*. At the left, Shakespeare speaks the prologue. At the right, the throne, used both in *Macbeth* and in the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*, is being lowered.

In England and America

THE *Manchester Evening News,* under the heading *Has America Left England Behind?* discusses with understanding and appreciation the subject of the difference in the development of Little Theatres on both sides of the Atlantic. Such a discussion must always have many raw edges because the amateur movements in the two countries divide themselves so differently. Much of the experimental work in play-production which is the business of the better American Little Theatres is done in England, and usually better done, (at least in the acting) by the private, professional play-producing societies. Some of the British provincial repertory theatres would be classed in America not as Little Theatres but as stock companies, and conversely some of the American Little Theatres would, in England, be repertory companies. Much of the best experimental work in design and production in America, that which "shows off" best in pictures, is done in school and college laboratories which have a theatre equipment financed far beyond the possibilities of English schools of the same quality or of art theatres, English or American. Many of the well organized Little Theatres in America are bad theatre at best, and many of what are called in England, amateur societies, which no doubt add greatly to the pleasure of village life, but little to their art, would not in America be called "theatre" at all. So that any comparison of the standard of work in the two countries is almost impossible practically. The important thing is that there should be movement and progress all along both lines.

One distinction that the Manchester "Prompter" emphasizes, however, is right. "The American Little Theatres," he says, "are blessed with far greater catholicity of taste and choice than we English amateurs seem to possess. Pirandello, Andreyev, O'Neill, Sierra —these seem to be almost the general run of authors whose works

are played successfully in the Little Theatres all over the United States. How rarely they figure in our English programmes. How much more often they might."

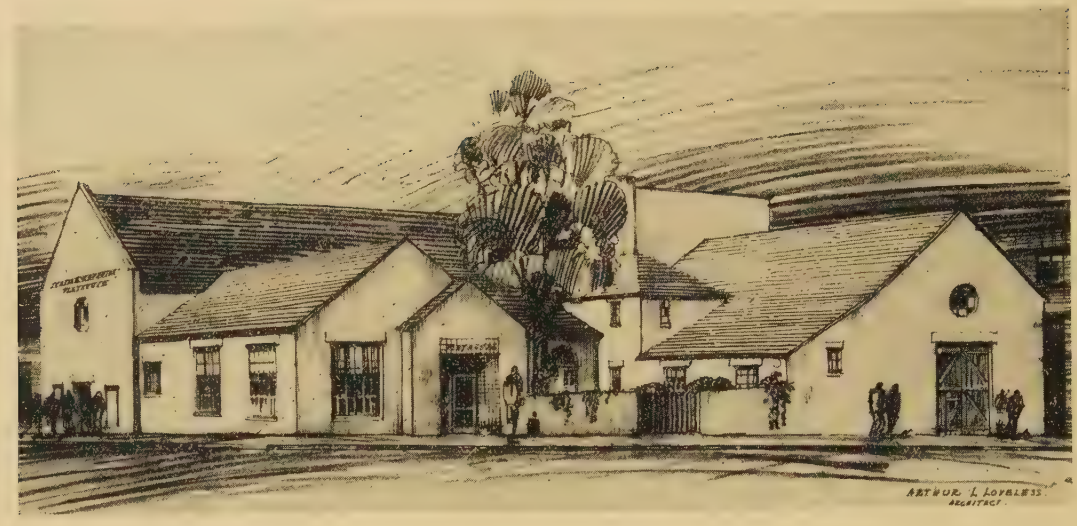
The programs of the early season may not be the best proof of this statement. But there happen to be on the desk today these two repertories to contrast, which are at least evidence—one a series of programs from the Plymouth, England, Repertory Players, the other an announcement of the year's plan of the Seattle, Washington, Repertory Playhouse.

From Plymouth: *On Approval,* by Frederick Lonsdale; *Mrs. Dane's Defence,* by Henry Arthur Jones; *To What Red Hell?,* by Percy Robinson; *Ask Beccles,* by Cyril Campion and Edward Dignon; *The Faithful Heart,* by Monckton Hoffe.

From Seattle: "Definitely planned are: *Major Barbara,* by Shaw; *Six Characters in Search of an Author,* by Pirandello; *Peer Gynt,* by Ibsen, with Grieg's music; under consideration are: *The Living Corpse,* by Tolstoy; *The White Headed Boy,* by Robinson; *Our American Cousin,* by Taylor; *The Mask and the Face,* by Chiarelli; *The Only Way* (*A Tale of Two Cities,* by Dickens); *The Cherry Orchard,* by Tchekov; *Loyalties,* by Galsworthy; *Little Lord Fauntleroy,* by Burnett; *The Reluctant Dragon,* a dramatization of Kenneth Grahame's story of the same name, and others. The last two are included in a series of young people's performances, and a group of puppet plays will be introduced into the Playhouse program for the first time. The Playhouse will also continue its efforts to encourage Northwest playwrights. In its short history more than a dozen plays have been written for it, three of which have been produced in two years with unusual success. A prize is offered annually for the best play from the pen of a local author, and several have already been submitted this year."

And it is well to add that the decidedly international quality of the latter program, added to the local plays written for it by local playwrights, is building for the Seattle organization enough enthusiasm and support to finance the new theatre illustrated opposite. Let this carry what moral it may.

Seattle is fortunate in possessing two of America's most progressive and experimental tributary theatres, the Repertory Theatre (pictured on the next page) and the Cornish School. These scenes are from Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight* produced at the Cornish School by Herbert Gellendré. (*Photographs by Kennell-Ellis*)



THE SEATTLE REPERTORY PLAYHOUSE

The Seattle Repertory Playhouse, newest of the theatres built by amateur organizations, is constructed about a grassy court graced by a tall elm. Opening on the court is an arcade along one side of which are the box-office windows. French windows allow exit from a roomy lounge to the court. The auditorium, equipped with air-cushion orchestra chairs, has a seating capacity of 350. The stage is large and equipped with the most modern stage and lighting devices. There are rooms for dressing, rehearsals, offices, storage, and scene building. The theatre, designed by Arthur L. Loveless, architect, was constructed at the approximate cost of $30,000. A membership of about two thousand makes the undertaking self-supporting. The directors of the theatre are Mr. and Mrs. Burton W. James.

ATHENS RE-EXPLORED

The Greek Way, by Edith Hamilton. W. W. Norton: New York. $3.00. J. N. Dent: London.

IT is always exciting when Hellenism is re-discovered, and something is almost bound to emerge from the clash and sparking of the re-discovery. *The Greek Way* is an enthusiastic book; it is written from the spiritually youngest, and in some ways most generous-minded country, America (and charmingly produced there). Miss Hamilton, in her individual re-discovery of Greece—and when she says Greece she means almost exclusively Athens, which is sometimes rather disconcerting—has seen Hellenic thought and feeling brought to its climax in the fifth century dramatists, the one comic and three tragic writers. By the chances of time and fate, the dispersal or burning of libraries and the bigoted ignorance of Christian destroyers, they are the only survivors of a long generation of playwrights some of whose plays were awarded first prizes by the Athenian audience when Sophocles or Aristophanes were second or un-placed. One can only hope that nothing supremely good has been lost to us forever. But the plays we have are only a few out of the heavy total which those remarkably prolific Athenians—who were also active citizens, soldiers, judges, householders—managed to produce.

Miss Hamilton has very boldly considered her dramatists on almost pure aesthetic and ethical grounds, without either placing them in history or in ritual. I wonder how much a reader who was unaware of the outline of fifth century events and the profound difference between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, would appreciate the difference between Aeschylus and Euripides, or how much a reader who did not realize the crude and yet profoundly religious beginnings of drama in the harvest-play, would see how suddenly Aeschylus stepped out of that onto the blazing heights of tragedy?

Some of Miss Hamilton's most interesting and original passages are her comparisons, for instance between the Hebrew poetry of the Bible, which appeals directly to the emotions, forcing up the tension by repetition—much as D. H. Lawrence did in his later work—and the extremely economical and intellectual Greek poetry which refuses to take advantage of its hearer's heart. Again, she compares Aristophanes and the *Clouds* with Gilbert and *Patience,* and sets one wondering whether, if Victorian England had not lain so heavily on Gilbert, he might have produced stuff as tremendous and forcible as the Athenian's. I doubt it; for the Englishman was never a great poet, never a creator of sheer beauty; he wrote nothing that can move us as the choruses in the *Peace* do, and I cannot think that two thousand years hence anything of his will move an audience to tears and laughter and violent excitement as I have seen a Paris audience moved by a translation of the *Birds.* Gilbert could

never have invented Basileia, that Kingliness, that Power, which men get who fight with the Gods!

Anyone interested in the Greek drama will find much to set him thinking in Miss Hamilton's book. I like a great deal of her translations, especially of the comedy. I wonder whether she knows Browning's translation of the *Agamemnon,* which, apart from a few annoying mannerisms, is amazingly good? Perhaps her arguments still want some tightening up, some Hellenic economy, for her enthusiasm sometimes runs away with her for a page or two, but after all, enthusiasm is a very delightful thing!

NAOMI MITCHISON

SIR ARTHUR PINERO

Sir Arthur Pinero's Plays and Players, by Hamilton Fyfe. Macmillan: New York. $5.00.

THIS story, centering about the career of one of England's oldest and most distinguished playwrights, carries with it the rather comprehensive history of the English stage all the way from Irving and the introduction of Ibsen to Frederick Lonsdale and Owen Nares. From these pages emerges the personality of a man who has perseveringly exercised his talent through decades of changing attitudes on the part of fickle theatre audiences. Here, too, is a complete appreciation of his work, with careful critical analyses of all of his plays. And behind both of these is the time with its other great figures, and minor ones too, making a variegated background.

One of the fine things that this book accomplishes is to convince its readers of the real genius of Pinero. This age has been too apt to put him off under the blanket epithet of "Victorian". Mr. Fyfe's book is almost too admiring. But he has chosen his quotations well. Even in some of the dramatist's earliest and worst plays he has found passages of true wit, bits of dialogue much truer in character and humor than many of the hard, smart lines popular on the stage today. He has also shown us a man who was not afraid to be inconsistent, a man who has felt influences and admitted them to his work. It is a far cry from *Daisy's Escape* to *Dr. Harmer's Holidays,* which is to receive a New York production this season. Between them lie *The Profligate*, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *Midchannel*, *The Mind-the-Paint Girl*, *The Enchanted Cottage* and many others. What changes of circumstance and thought attended the composition of these plays! Yet Pinero has ever sought to live up to the lights of the time, and to an amazing extent he has succeeded.

The people of today have become the early posterity of most of Pinero's contemporaries. But he refuses to be an anachronism. Even while modern students are considering "his place in the history of English drama", while that place, as we move farther and farther away from the 19th Century, seems more and more important, he writes another play. Mr. Fyfe's book is a competent record of a gifted worker's diligence. It is valuable as literary history and it is easy and pleasant reading.

CARL CARMER

CRAIG ON IRVING

Henry Irving, by Gordon Craig. Longmans, Green: New York, $3.00. J. N. Dent: London.

FOR one evening let the theatre on Broadway or Shaftesbury Avenue go its own way. Shake off any feeling of responsibility to add your suffrage to the success of any play on the boards. Take your money instead to the first available bookstore (not to a renting library) and buy a copy of Gordon Craig's biography of *Henry Irving.* Turn off the radio, put away the gramophone records, sit down in a comfortable chair—you won't even need a fire or a companion—and prepare to enjoy yourself. Prepare to be "let in" by

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Reinhardt's handling of stage groups both large and small has always been recognized as strikingly effective. Here are two examples, one from the director's revival of *Oedipus Rex* and the other from *Henry IV*, Part One. The tap room scene forms an interesting contrast with the similar scene depicted on page 991. (*From Max Reinhardt, Twenty-five Years of the German Theatre*)

special favor, to the auditorium of one of the world's foremost theatres, to the back stage, the stage, to the leading actor's dressing room, to rehearsal and to first night —all at the same time. Be sure you will never have quite such an opportunity again. Unless, perhaps, Craig writes another biography—of his mother, Ellen Terry. What a book! What a masterpiece of theatre biography! What a theatrical biography—the man Irving and the actor Irving coming more and more to life with every written page, his friends and associates around him, the Lyceum Theatre again humming and vital with his presence. And what a master stroke at the end of the book, when Irving is completely there, his voice, his talk, his gesture, the whole rhythm of his movement and his speech, to print again those scenes from the wretched plays which Irving made a world believe were great plays—which were indeed great plays because they were so great material for so great an actor. There you are, actually at the theatre, with Irving playing for you!

Through the courtesy of the publishers THEATRE ARTS was able to include in the October issue, one chapter from the book just in advance of its publication. There were other tempting chapters, on the Lyceum Theatre, on Irving's masterpiece, *The Bells*, on his method as stage manager and as theatre director—half a dozen others, for that matter, each of which was a treasure.

But after all, the important thing was that as many people as possible who loved the theatre greatly or who loved it not quite enough should be induced to read this book as quickly as possible. So the editors chose the first chapter in order that the readers might go at once to search out the second for themselves. And perhaps, too, because that chapter showed not only Irving, but Craig as audience to Irving—the biographer, after all these years, still writing not so much out of his memory of his teacher and hero but out of the feeling of affection, admiration and appreciation which has kept that memory alive and young through all these years.

Henry Irving is at once the work of a master and a youth. It is prejudiced from beginning to end. It is violent in foolish spots, too obvious to quote. But it is never uncritical. On the contrary, it is written always with the keenest edge of criticism, the sharpest analysis of every detail of theatre and play and actor. If you want not only to know but to experience the theatre of Irving's day and Irving in the theatre, you have only to read this volume. Perhaps that can be said of other theatre biographies. If so, where are they?

FREDERICK MORTON

A THEATRE SAGA

Max Reinhardt, Twenty-Five Years of the German Theatre, by Hans Rothe. R. Piper & Co: Munich.

WHEN Max Reinhardt came to America to produce *The Miracle* six years ago, his name was already as well established in the American theatre as though he had worked in it for years. From the days of *Sumurun* his productions had come across the water either directly or by imitation. His methods and designs had been passed on and reproduced. Books about his work as a producer and director and especially about his methods of training actors and developing designers had accumulated on the shelves and served many other producers as a text.

When Reinhardt came with his company a few years ago bringing *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Peripherie,* and *Everyman* there was an enormous interest and some disappointment. Was this all of Reinhardt? Was that all he could do with his stage, all he could accomplish with the wonderful actors that circled around him? It took time to learn that making the actors what they were was a chief part of Reinhardt's great accomplishment, that making

a bare stage his own stage was another, one which he was not able to accomplish in a moment in a badly equipped theatre in a strange country.

There is more of Reinhardt as producer in the book which was issued to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary at the Deutsches Theater than could be seen in any fortnight of production. It is the record of Reinhardt at home, in a playhouse he created, with players he developed, and of a repertory he rounded out as no other repertory has ever been.

Max Reinhardt, Twenty-Five Years of the German Theatre is, except for its introductory chapters, a biography in pictures, supplemented by *Die Spielpläne*, a record in statistics. Pictures and statistics are equally eloquent of this great man's great accomplishment. The illustrations are not chosen for their decorative quality alone but as a history of Reinhardt's progress through the quarter century and the growth of the actors and designers associated with him. It tells a story of a man who is neither pioneer alone nor reformer alone, neither a conservative nor a radical but a man who loves the theatre in all its phases. One of Reinhardt's actors once said he thought there must have been a day when God, bored with making men and women, made a *theatermensch* instead, and that man was Reinhardt, the theatre to him more real than actuality.

The plan that Reinhardt set himself was not, as Arthur Kahane says, a program but a unity. He has produced in these twenty-five years all of the great poet-playwrights of the past from the Greeks to Shakespeare; the great German classics like Goethe and Schiller and also the great romantic classics, Calderon and Molière and their followers; all of the world's greatest humorists, Aristophanes, Gozzi, Goldoni, Gogol, Offenbach; the poets of his own time, the great naturalists, the moderns of every country.

In his twenty-five years in Berlin there are records of 23,374 performances of 452 pieces under Reinhardt's direction, and the two lists recorded below of the most successful authors, and of Shakespeare's plays in detail give a glance across this record.

AUTHOR	PERFORMANCES
Shakespeare	2527
Shaw	1207
Wedekind	1171
Hauptmann	974
Goethe	746
Schiller	645
Strindberg	491
Tolstoi	473
Molière	333
Sternheim	318
Ibsen	306
Hebbel	290
Kleist	202
Hofmannsthal	202
Kaiser	189
Schnitzler	132

PLAY	PERFORMANCES
A Midsummer Night's Dream	427
The Merchant of Venice	363
Twelfth Night	291
Hamlet	227
A Winter's Tale	199
Romeo and Juliet	172
The Taming of the Shrew	102
Othello	99
King Lear	94
Much Ado About Nothing	74
Julius Caesar	69
The Merry Wives of Windsor	64
As You Like It	63
Comedy of Errors	59
King Henry IV, Part I	43
Macbeth	42
King Henry IV, Part II	40
Troilus and Cressida	35
The Tempest	30
Cymbeline	14
Richard II	11
Coriolanus	9

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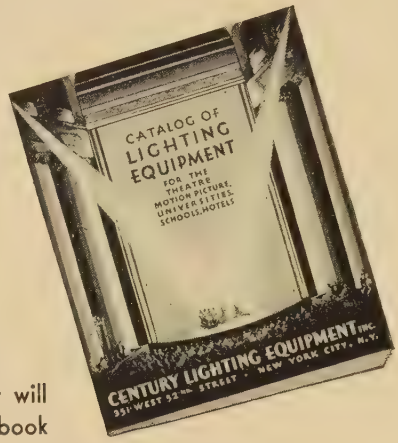

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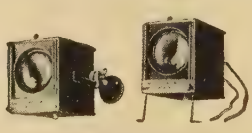

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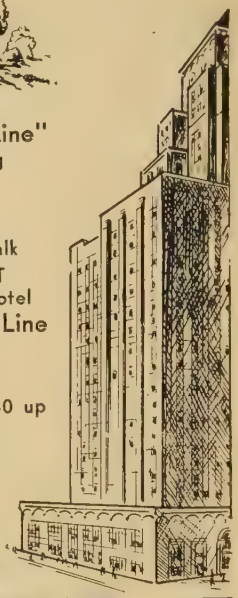

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EDITH J. R. ISAACS, *Editor*
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PAUL MUNI AS SAUL HOLLAND IN *This One Man*

The WORLD and the THEATRE

War Against Speculators— Pilgrims to Malvern— Die Meininger

AFTER three months which have seen the first concerted attempt to control ticket speculation on Broadway, the League of New York Theatres is beset by complications, but it is expected to survive. At this writing (early in November), it has accepted the unanimous resignation of the sixteen accredited brokers who had pledged themselves not to charge more than a seventy-five cent advance over the published box office price. Four of them have been partially reinstated by the league which will allow them to sell league tickets but not on the former basis. Instead, they and the Postal Telegraph Company will sell tickets from a central pool. It was the principal complaint of the agents that the small individual allotments of seats for hit shows, sold at the limited premium allowed by the league, did not bring a satisfactory return. The league's answer to their withdrawal has been to secure the Postal Telegraph offices, of which there are 162 in New York City, to act as agencies and receive orders for seats; it is also announced that producers who are still members of the league

The Comédie Française celebrated its two hundred and sixtieth birthday this Fall with appropriate ceremonies including a sketch in which Louis XIV was shown on the battlefield signing the decree creating the theatre, his desk a drum head.

Sir Edmund K. Chambers, known the world over for his scholarly works on the theatre, is a member of the Bodleian Library Commission now visiting America on a tour of inspection that is to include the principal libraries of the world. The object of the tour is the preparation of a plan for the enlargement and modernization of the Bodleian Library. The Oxford University Press has just issued Chambers' *William Shakespeare*, a two volume companion work to the well known *The Mediaeval Stage* and *The Elizabethan Stage*.

The Civic Shakespeare Society of Chicago has begun its second season under the leadership of Fritz Leiber. A press report says that the first season was a great financial success, having paid a net profit of $146,000 without drawing on the annual guarantee of $250,000 furnished by Harley L. Clarke. This year's repertory begins with *Hamlet* and includes *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, King Lear, Twelfth Night, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Richard III.*

●

Repertories for the 1930-31 season which offer an interesting contrast are those of the French theatre of l'Atelier and the English Birmingham Repertory Theatre. The scheduled productions of the former are as follows: *Le Fils de Don Quichotte* by Pierre Frondaie; *Jean Musse, ou l'Ecole de l'Hypocrisie* by Jules Romains; *Têtes Brulées* by Armand Salacrou; *Le Philosophe et sa Femme* by Louis Laloy; *Ce que Femme peut* by H. Pradalès; *La Farce des Idées* by Fernand Divoire; and *L'Aventurier* by Jean Variot. The English Theatre has announced these plays: *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* by Rudolf Besier; *Madame Pepita* by G. Martinez Sierra; *The Devil's Bridge* by Henri Gheon; *Charmeuse* by E. Temple Thurston; *The Warriors at Helgeland* by Henrik Ibsen; *Helen With the High Hand*, adapted from Arnold Bennett's novel by Richard Pryce; *The Playboy of the Western World* by J. M. Synge; and *The Dover Road* by A. A. Milne.

●

The League of Composers, as is its custom, will present a stage program at the Metropolitan Opera House, on April 21st of next year. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association under the leadership of Leopold Stokowski will again present the music which will be interpreted on the stage by a company of theatre-artists, including mimes, singers, dancers, and a large chorus. Works chosen are Stravinski's interpretation of *Oedipus Rex* and Prokofieff's *Pas d'Acier*.

will sell the great majority of their tickets at the box offices. In either case, there is now nothing to prevent the recalcitrant brokers from surreptitiously obtaining seats in unlimited quantities for sale at the former outrageous advances in price generally current. Again, anyone who has observed the character of the average Broadway manager may well doubt that he would remain faithful to any cooperative agreement. To protect a show of whose fate he is not certain, the temptation will persist to negotiate a "buy", the arrangement by which a broker gambles on the success of production by purchasing blocks of seats for performances far in advance.

Under the leadership of such theatremen as Arthur Hopkins, Brock Pemberton and a few others, the league's outstanding accomplishment has been to encourage the public to go directly to the box office. And although there have been moments when the end of the experiment seemed to be in sight, there is still this hope for its renewal in a realization by the public that the ticket brokers are a parasite on the theatre and not in any real sense a convenience to the great mass of theatregoers. The consolidated ticket office, operated as a non-profit making pool, seems more than ever to be the one answer to the problem.

A TOURIST with any dramatic inclination will have to be staunch in his determination to keep out of England next year if he would

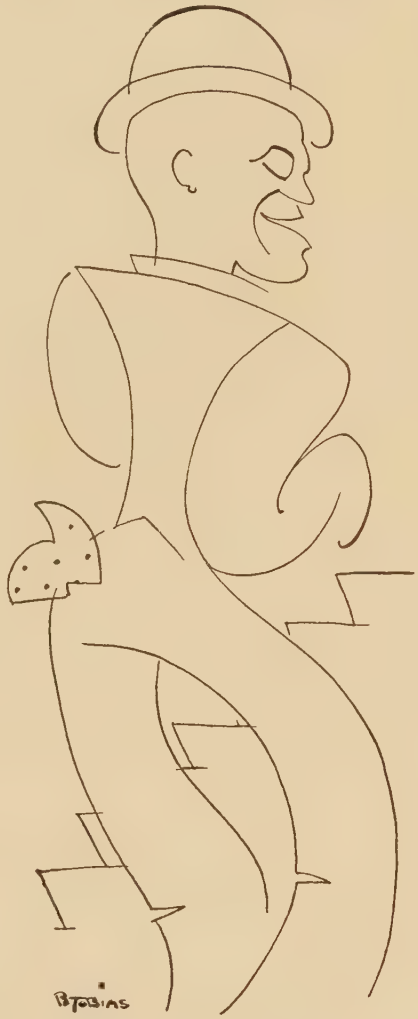
stay away from the Third Malvern Festival to be held in August of 1931. It looks as if all Sir Barry Jackson needs to do to send the whole western world tumbling in among his lovely hills is actually to produce the historical series of English dramas which he announces for the 1931 Festival. For, besides making available to students a series of productions which will teach them more about English theatre history than most courses in play writing, it offers to all theatre lovers an introduction to an almost unplayed series of those brilliant, bold, quick-moving, robust plays of early England whose vigor has never been equalled in the Anglo-Saxon theatre. Here is the list as the latest announcement comes:

1513—*Hick Scorner*—Author Unknown
1552-54—*Ralph Roister Doister*—Nicholas Udall
1603—*The Woman Killed With Kindness*—Thomas Heywood
1668—*She Would If She Could*—George Etherege
1777—*A Trip to Scarborough*—Sheridan
1840—*Money*—Bulwer Lytton
1931—Not yet selected (with a hint of a new play by G. B. S.)

The play list is supplemented by the announcement that the first week of the Festival will be a special Students' Week, with lectures on the various phases of the English drama by Allardyce Nicoll, Bonamy Dobrée, W. J. Lawrence and Dr. F. E. Boas.

THERE died recently in Germany an elderly actress who for many years had played comic character parts in a small provincial theatre. She was the subject of friendly obituaries in Ger-

Opera notes: Richard Strauss has made some modifications in the book of Salomé. The work in its new version will be presented this season at the Dresden Opera where it was first produced. The opera, *Rusalka,* one of Dvorak's earliest and least known compositions, was recently revived with success in Vienna. Alfredo Cassella is at work on a new three-act opera based on a tale by Gozli—*La Femme et le Serpent.*



Bill Robinson, a caricature of the tap dancer, by Beatrice Tobias

The Concert Dancers League is laying the foundations of a plan for a Summer Dance Congress in New York.

Kreuzberg in Three Mad Figures, *a caricature by Beatrice Tobias*

The Royal Theatre at Copenhagen has recently undergone complete reorganization. This step has included the grant of a government subsidy of 800,000 crowns (about $1,100,000) and the construction (next door to the famous old theatre and connected with it) of the government radiophonic building, including ateliers, studios and a theatre of 1200 seats. It is hoped that this joining of theatre and radio interests will place both on a firm financial basis. The Royal Theatre has opened its season with a production of Elmer Rice's *Street Scene* under the title, *La Rue.*

•

Palm Beach is to have a new professional theatre. The Palm Beach Playhouse, Inc., has been formed and it is announced that its first season will begin in January with A. A. Milne's *Mr. Pim Passes By.* Among the other productions planned for the ensuing ten weeks are Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, Gilda Varesi's *Enter Madame*, Sutton Vane's *Outward Bound*, Noel Coward's *The Young Idea*, Tchekov's *The Cherry Orchard*, and Pirandello's *Henry the Fourth.*

•

Almost as international as the record of *The Beggar's Opera* is that of *On the Spot*, the English Mr. Edgar Wallace's satiric melodrama of American gangster life which has had its hundredth Paris performance.

man theatre magazines, in spite of which the name of Fanny Stolzenberg will hardly be remembered by the world at large, even in the theatre's vague way. Yet her death was of some importance because of the memories it evoked. She was the last surviving woman member of the famous players of the court theatre at Meiningen—"Die Meininger", as they were called—a group that did as much to direct the course of the modern theatre as any in history and who are already, much to the modern theatre's loss, largely forgotten. Even Sheldon Cheney, in his record of *The Theatre*, with its invaluable accounts of the leaders of other days, passes them by. In a book called *Geschichte Der Meininger*, dated 1926, Max Grube, who was one of the younger leading players of the theatre's best days, writes a full, loving, but nevertheless critical account of this distinguished playhouse that will amply repay reading. Probably there is not in all theatre history a more dramatic story than that of the cultivated, talented, modest nobleman, Georg II of Sachsen-Meiningen, as aristocratic in his tastes as in his traditions, who made of his small Hoftheatre a stage for a perfect working ensemble. Georg II was not as rich in money as in spirit, and the economic problems of court life and of the theatre might often have been confusing for anyone who loved art less. But for him, as for his wife, Helene, Freifrau von Heldburg (a former actress in the company), his associate in its direction, there was always only one answer to

Georg II, duke of Sachsen-Meiningen, who through a long life was not only patron of his court theatre but a collaborating artist designing sets and costumes. He made the provincial theatre of which he was the guiding spirit one of Europe's most distinguished organizations and he was responsible in large measure for tours which included over twenty-five hundred guest-performances in cities throughout Europe.

MARIA STUART

A drawing by Georg II for the second act of Schiller's *Maria Stuart* as produced by the Meininger troupe. Scene design was never permanently fixed with this company and, just as new and better effects in acting and direction were obtained with rehearsals and successive productions, setting designs were regarded as plastic and ever subject to changes that might effect improvement.

FIESKO

Georg II's drawing for the fifth act of *Fiesko* produced by his Meininger troupe. The players of the company were costumed with meticulous attention to historic accuracy, a step in advance of the anachronisms that went before, and an anticipation of the modern attempt to create, not exact verisimilitude, but the atmosphere and spirit of a period.

DIE JUNGFRAU VON ORLEANS

A drawing by Georg II of the fourth act of the Meininger troupe's production of Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. The performances of his court theatre group were particularly famous for their effective use of large crowds. This was partially due to the fact that leading players who were not acting prominent parts took their places in the crowd giving it fluid and effective movement. It was also due to the director's having complete control of the entire production and his desire to mold it into a unified and harmonious whole, an early foreshadowing of contemporary theatre methods.

such questions as whether new costumes should be added to the court wardrobe or to the theatre's, whether a play should have a new setting or a drawing room a new carpet.

When the Company had reached the perfection the Duke desired of them he carried them triumphantly to Berlin's leading theatre and from Berlin, season by season from 1874 to 1890, to Vienna, Prague, Budapest, London, St. Petersburg, and other great cities where their devotion to an ideal and the high level of their accomplishment won them universal honor. And, as is usual in such affairs, the repertory with which "Die Meininger" crowded the world's most blasé theatres consisted of the world's best plays — chiefly poetry — Shakespeare and Schiller, Moliére, Kleist and Goethe, with many another writer of classic drama.

An old play and an old theatre are renewing their youth in Paris together this season. The Montparnasse, once the home of Antoine's Théâtre Libre, has joined the Odéon in the ranks of venerable playhouses made modern and, under the direction of Gaston Baty, is inaugurating its new period with a production of *L'Opera de Quat' Sous*, a title which may be recognizable as a French rendition of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. The piece is the French version by Nicole Steinhoff and André Mauprey of the German adaptation by Bert Brecht, retaining the German incidental music by Kurt Weill. Successfully revived for two seasons (1920-21) at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, *The Beggar's Opera* (first played in London in 1728), had a successful career in Brecht's adaptation entitled *Dreigroschenoper* at the Schiffbauerdam and Komedienhaus.

•

A Paris production of *Lysistrata* is spoken of as an event of the coming winter. It will be known as *L'Assemblée des Femmes*, and will use the Maurice Donnay adaptation.

One of Georg II's designs for the Meininger troupe's production of Macbeth. *As with other repertory theatres Shakespearean plays were found the most popular.*

HENRIK IBSEN

Seal the lips, that was always his way; beauty is no flower,
Beauty is a peak of ice, blue against bluer sky.
The word is implicit, not spoken; let it be secret,
A fox at the entrails, the cloak held tightly and no cry uttered.

The winged horse was shot under him, or so he said;
But the mountain peaks shine clear in the blue morning
And beauty is not a word to be bandied about.
The mouth drawn tight as a thread and the gimlet eyes knew what
they knew.

The air cuts like a knife higher up; it is hard going.
For a moment they stood at the top with clouds under their feet;
But a slide of snow or the head's own dizziness brought them down,
And the clouds closed quietly over them. Nothing was altered.

And Emilie came that summer at Gossensass, before the leaves
Had begun to fall from the wooded slope of the valley;
And in the autumn a photograph saying in a crabbéd script:
An die Maisonne eines Septemberlebens.

And somewhat more: the nerves laid bare like a chart, the mind
Filed to a point, the heart cleansed; Helena,
The fingers caught in her hair; and at the hill's crest
Two women and a dead man, and the snow falling.

Lindley Williams Hubbell

BOOKS INTO PLAYS

Broadway in Review

By JOHN HUTCHENS

IT is admittedly the tendency of poor dramatizations to wander, fiction-like, over more ground than the limitations of the playhouse allow. Three times within these last four weeks the Broadway stage faced its old and disturbing problem of the dramatized novel. And the results suggested again, as they have always done in the past, that the theatre can only be asked to recreate as well as it may, and in its own terms, the materials of subjective writing. What comes of this must be judged as theatre alone. Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms,* in an "arrangement" by Laurence Stallings, was the feeblest new play of the last month. *Mr. Gilhooley,* derived from Liam O'Flaherty's novel, was the strongest and most theatrically satisfying. Both failed, but there is no working generality that can dismiss the fact on the easy ground that both were derived from novels.

I have not read the novel, *Mr. Gilhooley,* and can only suspect—indeed, admit—that its adaptation by Frank Elser probably does not bring over the full force and passion of the original work. The theatre stops where a novelist, within his rights of omniscience, enters upon the minds of his characters, arriving at motives and conclusions from the vantage point that he assumes. Or, at the best, the theatre proceeds from that point by its own methods. Those methods, of necessity, are apt to resolve on the modern stage into acting and the power of acting to stand as a revelation of what moves in the minds of men and women on a stage. The dramatic power of *Mr. Gilhooley,* as Jed Harris brought it to the stage of the Broadhurst Theatre, came finally to that. There, in a narrative framework that sagged and sometimes took the performance with it, was the story of the dissolute Dubliner who, unable to hold the love of a young girl, and taunted by jealousy of her former lover, was driven at last to murder and suicide. In the first act, which established the mood of tragedy, Mr. Harris was consum-

mately skilfull with the details of a complete realism; of Mr. Gilhooley, drunken and wavering; of Dublin, old, damp and forlorn. And the play, thus given a sense of its doomed conclusion, moved on from there through passion and despair to a final moment of madness that was completely prepared. How vital and luminous was the statement made by the performance of Arthur Sinclair and Helen Hayes was clear chiefly then—how far they had come, and through how many swift and fluent transitions, from the first premise of the play to its conclusion. Each of them has been notable before in plays of greater artistic integrity than this one—Mr. Sinclair, most recently, in the O'Casey plays brought here by the Irish Players three years ago, Miss Hayes in a minor classic of the American theatre, *Coquette*. In *Mr. Gilhooley* her role, blurred at the edges in the writing, lacked the finality of the principal part. To bring it into being she fell back rather more frequently on those well designed artifices of the competent actress—little mannerisms for hysteria or tension or collapse. Mr. Sinclair's creation, sculptured out of a great vitality and maintained by an artist's controlling discipline, brought into the theatre a range of warmth and clarity that must remain memorable when better plays have come and gone and been forgotten.

The challenge that Hemingway's panoramic novel, *A Farewell to Arms,* held for the stage was never realized by Mr. Stallings, who fell midway between the book and the theatre. The play was successful neither as an "arrangement" in which the quality and texture of the prose would be suggested, nor as a dramatization that would stand alone. Pursuing its double path, the play settled down in two of the less restless phases of the novel—the hospital and hotel scenes in Milan—and there it established an interest of its own. Hemingway's dialogue, in its clipped, brisk rhythm, was carried over successfully, was given a measure of understanding and intimacy by Glenn Anders and Elissa Landi. Elsewhere, Mr. Stallings, striving desperately to pack into the play as much of the novel as possible, hurried important points of development together at an absurdly incredible speed; and Rouben Mamoulian's direction, busy with suggesting the tide of events surrounding the love story of Frederick Henry and Catherine Barkley, could find no uniform mood or final effect. The problem was too elusive for any stage technique short of an extreme impressionism. The

ROAR CHINA!

The opening scene in the New York Theatre Guild's exciting production of Tretiakov's propagandistic play, under the direction of Herbert Biberman. Lee Simonson, designer, uses the sails of these Chinese sampans (floating in a great tank of water) as a drifting curtain to conceal the British battleship (pictured on the next page). The settings alternate as the play progresses. (*Photograph by Vandamm*)

ROAR CHINA!

Constantly menacing, the grim turret of the battleship becomes a symbolic protagonist of oppression in this melodrama (out of Meyerhold's theatre in Soviet Russia) which now finds a place on the New York Theatre Guild program. At the end of one scene it moves majestically down stage until the long gray guns are projecting out over the audience. (*Photograph by Vandamm*)

fundamental error in the production was not that it dared to be a dramatization, but that it was a bad play that should have been rejected for the same reasons that would prompt a manager to return any other hopeless script.

Mr. Chester Erskin, facing a problem in many ways similar to that of Mr. Mamoulian, approached his first effort for the Frohman company, *Stepdaughters of War,* from the viewpoint of the director who dominates his production completely. The play, a dramatization by Kenyon Nicholson from a novel by Helen Zenna Smith, also was a war story, but shadowy and remote; and in its entirety it had no more force when Mr. Erskin had done with it than it possessed originally. As a virtuoso director, facing a barren prospect, he could do little but concentrate on the surface emotion of single scenes, attempting to give them the glow of moods held momentarily intact. The bitterness of the slow spiritual crumbling of girl ambulance drivers under fire in France; the great loneliness of one of them who went home to a family to whom she could not explain; the stillness of the empty hour when, looking ahead to the rest of her life with a disabled husband, she found herself out of the world with him. Mr. Erskin's toying with lights and sounds, sensitive and finely executed as they were, could merely emphasize further the vacuum of a play without body. Despair, and a dying sunset; a gleam of hope, and a ray of sunlight through a window; cannonading in the distance, and rhythms to which you listened to the exclusion of spoken words.

At the best it was a mild exercise in mechanics which Molnar afforded himself in *One, Two, Three,* an hour and a half out of his bag of innumerable technical tricks. Being too palpably a mere study in dexterity, it could not make for an evening of satisfaction in the theatre. However, faint though it was as a satire on great business executives, it afforded a curious view of an actor giving a fleeting theatrical importance to utterly transient material. The play sets as its goal the transformation of a socialistic taxi driver into a nobleman within the space of an hour, and so it is both written and played as a game against time. It must go ahead breathlessly, pausing only now and then for a moment of suspense as the directing genius decides upon his next move. At just this side of the hour, the taxi driver becomes a gentleman. But the contest and the play end at this moment with an abrupt little click

of emptiness. What Arthur Byron did to give life to this arid trickery was, however, an instructive exhibition of resourcefulness. Without cues other than mechanical ones (three telephones ringing, nine pushbuttons to call and dismiss a host of incidental characters), his five hundred speeches started every moment of action in the play. He asked a hundred questions but, a genius in action, could await no answers. Details heaped about him in a burlesque confusion that would have swamped one less adroit. Mr. Byron parried them with every nicety of a high comedian's repertoire. When the game became too mechanical and its machinery approached boredom, he diverted it with a sudden, dry and quiet inflection. Given no opportunity to communicate real character or a personal quality, hedged in by "props", he kept the play in focus above them with a driving energy that could almost rescue it from a playwright's brittle composition . . . The curtain-raiser, *The Violet,* also by Molnar, found Ruth Gordon in a sketch the satirical point of which was that harried theatrical producers are not only not monsters—they are bored with feminine attacks on their time and virtue. The sketch lasted for perhaps twenty minutes, and half of them were sustained by Miss Gordon's laconic style of understatement.

There threatens, for the moment, to be a flair for the all-feminine play, a natural counterpart of the success of those productions in which men hold the stage alone. The two entirely feminine plays brought in by the Fall had in common the fact that each was exceptionally well staged and acted and, despite those values, that each was singularly unimportant as dramatic narrative. Aimee and Philip Stuart's *Nine Till Six,* imported by the Shuberts from London, was a less obvious effort than *Blind Mice,* by Vera Casperay and Winifred Lenihan, and it gained in the measure that, however mild, it was self-sustaining. Its story, set in a London dress-making shop, was a small tempest of little problems solemnly conveying the principles of relationship between capital and labor, drawn on a miniature scale. Auriol Lee, around whom centered the trite plot of mannequins and milliners, took the role with a commanding, grave dignity, and wisely directed the production with an emphasis upon the variety of its personalities. That interest, which was the only one possible, was given the benefit of several clear cut performances by the players of an all-English

cast. Miss Lenihan and Miss Casperay, working furiously against the boredom of a commonplace tragedy, set *Blind Mice* in the "recreation room" of a working girls' club, and started a telephone to ringing. The plot came and went, and there remained that familiar situation of the New York theatre: the ornament of brisk and passingly interesting business; the momentary touch of discerning acting; the amusing idiom, amusingly and sharply spoken. That was all.

In Charles Hopkins's tiny theatre, to which a record of scrupulous productions has now given a certain pleasant identity, Mr. Hopkins began his first subscription season with *Mrs. Moonlight,* a sentimental and mystic pastiche of a play by Benn W. Levy. The sentiment is often legitimate in a direct and unaffected style. The mysticism is not. And the spell of the play, which finally settles down to mere charm, is shattered by the obviousness of what passes for extreme care in direction. Young Mrs. Moonlight, the wife of Tom Moonlight, is given one wish to make of a token, and she asks that she shall never look older than she does at that moment. The enormity of the misfortune dawns and grows on her until, pretending suicide, she disappears and returns seventeen years later as her own daughter-in-law. Having saved her daughter from an unhappy marriage, she vanishes again to reappear twenty years later as a mysterious stranger, youthful as ever, but old and dying and recognized only by her senile husband. . . . That is Mr. Levy's scarcely original outline. New or not (and one can scarcely begin to quarrel with a lack of novelty in the theatre), it is an idea that demands a style of its own; a quality, say, pervaded by a sense of its own unreality, such as *Berkeley Square* and *Mary Rose* enjoyed. Mr. Hopkins has, on the other hand, staged it very thoroughly for the solid laughs and the points of serious sentimentality, no less solid, that are in it. Leo G. Carroll, as a bashful suitor, creates the shuffling speech of an honest dullard, and scores admirably in a low comedy sense; Haidee Wright's comedy is quite at its querulous best, and Sir Guy Standing is straightforward and positive, as always. It is Edith Barrett's performance in which one finds the faults and assets of the play. Her personal beauty, of a frail and lovely sort, should complement the phantom quality that is intended. But the play never quite makes up its mind about its style, and this confusion is summarized

in a single moment. You see her about to bid farewell to a room which, presumably, she is leaving forever. She walks once around it, touching with her hands the objects she had known and lived with; then she stands at the door, hesitates, walks a second time about the room, repeating every movement. And in that second of clamorous insistence, *Mrs. Moonlight* becomes a very ordinary sentimental romance.

It could only be the admirable place that Arthur Hopkins holds in the New York theatre which allowed him to produce *Roadside,* the play which, with unfortunate advance praise from his well meaning friends, introduced Lynn Riggs to Broadway. One suspects that his Southwestern fantasy could never have seemed to Mr. Hopkins to have the factors of dramatic success. In the reading it had perhaps the interest of the good folk tale, and its stray moments of a fine poetic feeling and its basis of lively imagination remain attractive even now. Mr. Riggs seems at first hearing one of the many who write single speeches well, even stirringly; but who do not write a scene, and who will never write a play because, fundamentally, they do not think dramatically. His story, unlike the usual Broadway failure, left one thinking of it in terms of what had been intended. Here was to be a tall tale of a man called Texas, a Paul Bunyan figure who destroyed the county jail, wrecked the court room, defied judge and marshall and then met a woman quite as titanic as himself. It was to be a satirical comedy, with a burlesque but sympathetic portrait of a legendary hero, boisterous and full of rich primitive speech, acted with the boastful postures of a woodcut. Sometimes finely, more often self-con sciously, and always with the effect of story telling rather than of direct presentation, Mr. Riggs sketched it; Mr. Hopkins' theory of direction, which is to allow a play to find itself in the hands of its actors, inevitably left it inert.

Again comes Zoë Akins with a play, *The Greeks Had a Word For It,* which belies the first promise of her early work; which, indeed, is so remote from it that the promise has now very nearly ceased to exist. Her new play, like its predecessor of three seasons ago, *The Furies,* is heavy with her love for verbal trappings, for fine speeches charged with a soaring emptiness and spoken in the half lights of a half sophistication. Unlike that other play, which rose now and then to the personal glamor of Laurette Taylor, it

attempts to be brilliantly hard. But Miss Akins, while she still possesses her gift for a fine theatricality, apparently can not or does not care to write a sustained play. Instead, here are four episodes in the careers of a trio of professional ladies, three musketeers from the pages of the tabloids, ginfully disillusioned, wise and bitter. As Dorothy Hall, Verree Teasdale and Muriel Kirkland play the trio, they are very real, often laconically amusing, as they pursue their way from a night club to a great pianist's apartment to "a parlor of a private suite in the Ambassador Hotel". But if Miss Akins kindles a characterization in a line, she kills it just as promptly with a perverse romanticism that is out of all bounds. And when her play has ended, it has served only to prove that Miss Kirkland, introduced last year as the demure heroine of *Strictly Dishonorable,* has a range beyond that of the average type actress. She does not raise the play above the level Miss Akins has set for it; but she does give a tangible reality to whatever can be snatched out of misty fustian and pretentious overtones.

That apparently easy—but in fact dangerous and difficult—practice of setting the national weaknesses in a pillory finds two adroit examples in *Once in a Lifetime,* by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, and *Solid South,* by Lawton Campbell. The Hart-Kaufman play (it was first Mr. Hart's script, and then was revised and staged by Mr. Kaufman) chooses such a fertile field for ridicule as the talking picture industry. Mr. Campbell goes back to Virginia to draw a rambling cartoon of the professional Southerner. It proves significant that neither Mr. Hart nor Mr. Kaufman has ever been to Hollywood, but that Mr. Campbell comes from the South and writes from a concrete, if exaggerated, record of memory and observation. . . . What Mr. Hart and Mr. Kaufman have said about Hollywood is based on hearsay and distant evidences, and their bludgeoning can therefore be as unlimited as its object is incredible. What could be written of Hollywood that might not be true? They have taken advantage of their fantastic opportunities, and so there is less of character in their play than in *June Moon,* in which Mr. Kaufman and Ring Lardner performed a somewhat similar service last season for New York's own Tin Pan Alley. In *Once in a Lifetime* the wisecracks are completely important, and they are scattered continuously throughout a rambling plot to which Mr. Kaufman's direction gives a constant

interest built upon sheer speed. Being burlesque, its comment is not critical or serious in effect; and like so much of burlesque that is effective, it is performed—chiefly by Jane Dixon and Hugh O'Connell—with a solemnity that takes absurdity as far as it will go. The thread of a story carries three members of a vaudeville act to Hollywood in the modern gold rush that followed the first talking pictures. Arrived there, they start a school of speech, which fails, and in the end it is the stupid one of the three (he had been the "dead pan feed" in "the act") who, quite by accident, becomes a great director and overnight is one of Hollywood's evanescent heroes. These are the points of plot between which the sketches are packed as tightly as three acts can take them. There are the New York playwrights who, under contract, wait months to see producers who are feverishly doing nothing; there are the screen-struck bootblacks and telephone girls, the lighted pictures of directors over the doors of the waiting room, and the fantasia of Hollywood's petty officialdom—Well, returned travellers say that these things are true. . . . With intentions scarcely less farcical, Mr. Campbell concentrates his satire within a role, and lets his play be shaped by its performance. In *Solid South* it is Major Follonsby, and you would say off hand that there is danger in depending so completely upon a stock character in a stock situation: the Virginia gentleman, his languishing ladies, their warm, Southern charm that intones like a bell, and as emptily. Mr. Richard Bennett's talent for farcical mimicry roams over the role and makes of it an actor's holiday; gives it, within its natural limitations as character acting, a variety in bombast, posture and inventive business, edged by the exaggeration of low comedy. Without hitting too hard on a single note, he goes back to his effects occasionally to sustain the character which, in turn, is the pivot of the play.

As encouraging an event as the Fall has brought was the opening of Jane Cowl's season at Maxine Elliott's Theatre, under the management of Macgowan and Reed, in *Twelfth Night.* For it not only brought Miss Cowl back to a field for which her equipment is genuinely distinguished, but it gave to New York one of the swiftest and most fluent Shakespearean productions since the Barrymore-Hopkins-Jones *Hamlet.* Miss Cowl, whose Juliet remains among the fine recent creations in the American theatre, is,

nominally, the star of the production. But its direction by Andrew Leigh and its settings by Raymond Sovey combine to set the play free from the tradition of Shakespeare as a personal starring vehicle. And the light touch of Miss Cowl's comedy, the fine richness and flexibility of her voice, contribute to, rather than dominate, the production. Mr. Leigh, bringing with him from the Old Vic a deal of lively and imaginative business, has thrown emphasis upon the play as the delightful fantasy that it is; Raymond Sovey's settings, opening successively as the pages of a huge book set upstage, achieve a simplicity that sets off the actors and gives them the freedom of a unit set. The performance, thus set free, is open to the many styles of acting that such romantic farce provides. Leon Quartermaine, (a Shakespearian trouper long before he entered upon *Journey's End*), gives Malvolio the fine edge of sympathy and rough comedy that makes that role a test of an actor's understanding. Walter Kingsford's Sir Toby and Arthur Hohl's Sir Andrew are played with the unreserved heartiness that went into them. . . . The play will be kept in a repertory to which the next additions will be *Art and Mrs. Bottle*, by Benn W. Levy, and Ashley Dukes's *The Man With a Load of Mischief*.

THE LONDON SCENE

New Theatres for Old

By Ashley Dukes

HERE are new theatres on every hand. Even Whitehall, the most sedate of thoroughfares, now flaunts a tall façade glittering with lights and a foyer aglow with promise of entertainment. The Old Ship Restaurant (Heaven knows what it was doing in such a galley as Whitehall) has become a playhouse in black-and-white and silver, a fan-shaped intimate place that should evoke in authors and actors the gayest spirit of English comedy. This theatre is perhaps rather mannered and self-conscious, with its cocktail bars and its smart avoidance of capital letters for *stalls* and *circle*; its modernity may easily be out-of-date in 1935 or earlier; but still it is a house of style, beside which the most expensive movie-house yet built in London is a garish barn. That is a hopeful sign, for there is a mint of money at the service of the film, and yet that money cannot buy a good building or a beautiful decoration, and the very movie-fans who are urging us to see fresh masterpieces of the screen must always begin by apologizing for the building in which they are to be seen. "Of course" they say "it's at the 'Palatial', and you won't like that". They are right; we don't. The Palatial looks like a huge cheap chocolate-box from which the pink ribbon has just been unwound. Ten to one there are real goldfish in the illuminated fountain that plays in its foyer. We put down our half-crown (if we put it down at all, and do not flee incontinently from so much ugliness) at a box-office that is sure to be designed in the form of a palace, and we mount noiseless flights of steps to reach an auditorium that is like a really well-upholstered hell. . . . But enough; the point is that a new playhouse consciously means something where a new movie-palace unconsciously means nothing. Which is as it should be, and as it must be if the theatre is to rediscover its place and its purpose.

Seven Dials, too, begins to declare itself a new entertainment

H. K. Ayliff, one of England's most distinguished theatre workers, Stage Director of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre since 1922, and producer of all of the plays performed at the Malvern Festivals. Mr. Ayliff's summer productions included *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* which was so successful that it was brought to London and is now spoken of as a possible vehicle for Katharine Cornell in her next appearance on the New York stage.

London's striking new theatre, the Phoenix, which with the Cambridge, the Prince Edward, and the new playhouse made from The Old Ship Restaurant, is widening the city's dramatic horizons. Apparently it will begin to make dramatic history at once for Charles B. Cochran has announced that he will place it at the disposal of Gordon Craig for a production.

quarter. That district was formerly a backyard, not to say dustbin, of theatrical London, and very few wayfarers in Charing Cross Road or Shaftesbury Avenue had ever treaded its musty lanes. Here, as from the ashes of some ancient hearth of drama, rises the Phoenix, which having no room for a façade projects here a beak and there a wing or a claw upon the street. The effect is necessarily cramped, and that is a general criticism of the decorative scheme which has been in detail so admirably executed. The effect of copies of Renaissance paintings, and Renaissance decoration in general, must depend on the one absolute necessity of perspective. There must be space for contemplation. One is all the time on top of the decoration of the Phoenix, unless one is immediately at the bottom, as in the foyer with a mirrored ceiling. Still London owes this striking and ambitious theatre to a young impresario of the film, Sidney Bernstein, and it is a theatre that may easily make dramatic history, for Charles B. Cochran, the present tenant, has made great stir with an announcement that he will place it at the disposal of Edward Gordon Craig for a production. But that is another story, and one that we hope will have an important sequel.

Scarcely a stone's throw away is the new Cambridge, fortunate in a good corner site and more impressive outwardly. The interior scheme is unpretending, but the proscenium has a brave vaulted line and the proportions are beautiful and the whole makes an apt setting for the larger sort of spectacle. I like the Cambridge; there is no nonsense about it, and by its own architectural sweep it seems to forbid association with the dull and commonplace. And in a house that seems dedicated to revue, that is saying much. Then to complete the tale, in the midst of Soho is reared a sound foursquare building, the Prince Edward, which in taste and disposition ranks very creditably. Within a month these four playhouses have opened their doors, and more of them are building. Whether they are all destined permanently to remain playhouses is another question, the answer to which depends on the theatre and the playwright and a conscious direction of theatrical effort. If some of them are said to be wired for the talkies, that is only a reasonable precaution on the manager's part. He at any rate is becoming aware that two-thirds of the work now done by the stage can be as well or better done by the film; and if the other

third is too scarce or for any reason too difficult of presentation, he will connect up his electrical apparatus and present mechanized drama for a season. But we note that the purpose of the building remains theatrical.

Old plays appear on every hand. I do not mean revivals, of which there are many this autumn season, or plays already done in New York, of which there are not a few; but the old plays that are brand-new and differ not a whit from the brand-new plays of past Septembers. No particularly eventful work compels the stage and the public jointly to sit up and take notice. I find it easy to define my three preferences among a batch of plays seen. They are *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, by Rudolph Besier, as presented lately at the Malvern Festival and now brought to town; *Henry IV, Part I.*, as played at the Old Vic; and *The Far-Off Hills*, by Lennox Robinson, a little comedy with but one "name", that of Fred O'Donovan, in its cast. The list is not wildly exciting, even with John Gielgud as Harry Hotspur thrown in; but there it is. I enjoyed these plays most, and the fact that two of them are right off the fashionable map makes no difference. One does realize however that these three are themselves mellowed with age in conception and treatment—a grave and conventional Victorian chronicle, a piece of good Shakespearean rant and heroism and ribaldry, and an Irish domestic comedy even more modest in its defects than in its virtues. They seem to tell us that the stage is marking time, for they might have been produced in any September these seven years past, and would have given as much pleasure as they give now.

No one should quarrel with *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* because it is really about the Barretts, as it claims to be, and hardly at all about the Brownings. One of the Barretts is Elizabeth, and that must suffice. She is seen mostly in process of becoming Elizabeth Browning, and Robert Browning is seen by no means at his happiest in the background of her London home, where he is bound to cut the never very admirable figure of a clandestine lover, and where we know the door may open at any moment to admit that dreadful personage, Elizabeth's father, who remains a stationary tyrant through all the scenes, only his increasing madness marking any dramatic progress. The play does all that it sets out to do, and does it often very beautifully, thanks to Gwen Ffrangçon-Davies and

Cedric Hardwicke. And in its very different vein of humour and observation as much may be said for *The Far-Off Hills,* thanks to the artists of the Irish company. As for the *Henry IV* at the Old Vic, the policy of that theatre was never the creation of "stars", but in Gielgud at present it possesses an actor we must go to see in every part he plays, an actor seriously growing in stature from the imaginative stuff he lives upon. If such acting and such growth can be seen elsewhere, then let us not praise the Old Vic too highly. But they cannot be seen; either the talent or the imaginative nourishment is elsewhere lacking.

The Phoenix, that ambitious playhouse already mentioned, makes a bid for immediate success with *Private Lives*, by Noel Coward. A most dexterous piece of work, that goes without saying, in which we are persuaded by dialogue of radiant intelligence (too much of it, but always radiant) to apply our eye to the keyhole and watch trivial people behaving trivially on sofas and elsewhere. It is the presentation that counts, and Noel Coward having found his Gertrude Lawrence, as Sacha Guitry found his Yvonne Printemps, will find it hard to escape the rut of empty brilliance that now grips his chariot wheel. But being the embodiment of will and energy, he must always have something positive to express that the Frenchman has not. It makes itself heard even above the facile conversational tone of *Private Lives*, one of the two outstanding modern comedies of the season.

The other is Somerset Maugham's *The Breadwinner*, a play calculated to unsettle the minds of stockbrokers, and therefore by all reasonable canons an immoral work. It is true that Shaw has been trying to unsettle the minds of stockbrokers for more than forty years; but they never took the slightest noice of him, realizing as soon as he opened his mouth or put pen to paper that he was a being of a different order from themselves. But Somerset Maugham is another matter, for he speaks their own language and may be said to be quite at home in the smoke-room. When he writes a play about a stockbroker's revolt against his home and his desk in the City, the thing becomes positively dangerous. As a play, *The Breadwinner* is a stationary piece of discussion drama in which all the characters remain the same from first to last; but as a manifesto in favour of the primrose path of freedom (including freedom from financial scruples as generally understood in the City of London) it must be granted that it lacks moral justification.

And there is no getting away from morality in these matters, as Shaw has maintained a hundred times. You either unsettle the minds of stockbrokers because you firmly believe it is good for them to be unsettled, or else you stay your hand and let them go on with their business which is buying and selling for their clients, including dramatic authors. *The Breadwinner* seems to me in the strictest sense of the word a wanton play; and though a great deal of fuss has been made over some of its lines which are put into the mouths of young girls on the stage, the real ground of challenge is that an Ibsenite situation, the revolt of the male breadwinner, is exploited for inferior ends. But this is not to deny the bitter qualities of the piece, or the sense of reality that is brought into the character of the defaulting husband and man of affairs. Somerset Maugham's finer vein is nevertheless to be found in such a piece as *Home and Beauty*, now revived by the Embassy Theatre in South Hampstead. (This is the characteristic comedy that Reinhardt gives under the name of *Viktoria* on the German stage.)

Among the revivals of the early season I shall confess reluctantly to not having seen, as yet, either *The Devil's Disciple* played by Martin Harvey, or *Richard III* played by Baliol Holloway. As for Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode*, with which the Hammersmith Lyric makes one more venture in Old English comedy, it is a poor piece in two different manners, the eloquently poetic and the broadly comic, and they are made to blend in the usual Lyric fashion, which slightly perverts both of them. This time I find the effect exasperating, and so there is no use in dwelling upon anything but the vitality of Athene Seyler, who can over-act with the best of them when occasion demands it.

Of the plays first performed in America, and afterwards produced here, *Street Scene* of course made the most distinguished impression. *Let Us Be Gay* has had a considerable run with Tallulah Bankhead in the chief part, the fate of *Topaze* seems doubtful, and disaster soon overtook *Knave and Quean* (the American *Children of Darkness*) without any reflection upon Mary Ellis and Basil Sydney, who will surely play here again. There is more to be said of these plays, or most of them: but they must wait for a time less crowded than the opening of a season.

Meanwhile knocking at the door for attention come the Arts Theatre Club with George Moore's *Passing of the Essenes* and

C. K. Munro's *Mr. Eno* and the plays of J. T. Grein's Cosmopolitan Theatre; the Gate with Vajda's *The Professional Lover*; the Everyman with *The Wild Duck*; the Grafton with "Unusual Variety", including one creditable operetta called *Man in Cage*; and play-producing bodies like the Stage Society and the Venturers and the Repertory Players, who still find an audience for their experimental Sunday nights. Most of these are necessarily thinking in terms of drama alone, and frankly there is nothing very notable in the present result of their continual search for plays. London still waits for what Berlin and Paris already possess, two or three directors who think in terms of the theatre and employ dramas old and new as the essential material of their art of presentation. When those directors appear on the scene, it will be time enough to argue the question of whether or no the dramatist's position is endangered by them. I believe it is not; and the chief danger to the dramatist today seems to me to consist in a complete and utter uncertainty about the theatre where his play is to be performed, the stability and policy of the management, the personnel of the company, the manner of presentation, and indeed all the matters that are of the first practical importance to a writer for the stage. Let that uncertainty be removed, even by two or three playhouses, and the plays will be forthcoming soon enough. At any rate that is the opinion of a practising playwright, at the opening of this season 1930-31, which will carry the stage and the talkfilm another long step forward in their inevitable development.

ALABAMA

Material for a Dramatist's Note-Book

By CARL CARMER

ALABAMA is more than one of the states. It is another country. The Congo is not more different from Massachusetts or Kansas or California. Alabama is a land with a spell on it—not a good spell always. It is as often "conjured" as enchanted.

The casual alien is wont to dismiss Alabama as a "typical" southern state. To him the adjective may connote the wisteria-hung white pillars of plantation houses, spirituals from the cotton fields, mint-juleps, and a proud but frayed aristocracy. Or it may mean weathered cabins, moonshine, lynchings, and the Ku Klux Klan. In either case he is right but pitifully ignorant and incomplete in his understanding. The state has been listed with others as part of the "Bible Belt" or within the "Sahara of the Bozearts", categories that have some basis in fact but are too limited and arbitrary to be just. Such judgments would indicate the dullness of homogeneity. And, since they are general, most Americans know little of this exciting land of strange dialects and many bloods, of mountains and plains and swamps, of hill-billies and lint-heads and "niggers" and 'Cajuns.

It is a legend that the great chief Tush-ka-lusa, upon the accidental death of his son at the hands of one of De Soto's men, drew himself up to his seven-foot height and, standing over his dead boy's body, cursed the Black Warrior River which brought the white men to him. Since then, the story goes, not one year has passed in which the river has not claimed its white victim. The dramatic springs, now as then, out of this land. Emotions lie close to the surface in Alabama, and are quickly, sometimes all too quickly, converted into action. Life is a play there, a hard lived drama.

The man who would understand and express America successfully today, whatever his medium, but especially the dramatist,

might well turn to the deep south. There he will find what America has come from. What Alabama is now, much of the rest of the nation was fifty years ago. Who enters the state steps into the past quite as astonishingly as did Peter Standish in the old house on Berkeley Square. There the stories which our fathers have told us of other days, are really happening. Alabama is a background that is still alive.

Plays and books have been written of mountaineer life in the Appalachians. Their scenes have been laid in North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky. Little has been written, little is known of life in the mountains of north Alabama. Indeed a reviewer in so authoritative a journal as the *New York Times Book Review* recently announced that there are no mountains in the deep south. Yet the descendants of the Elizabethans in the mountain fastnesses of Alabama still sing of "cruel Barbara Allen" and "Johnny Randall, my son" with no literary spy among them. They are so shut off from the rest of the state (I have this on the authority of one of them) that a boy can grow to man's estate on the table-land of Sand Mountain without having ever seen a negro. *The Sacred Harp Singers,* largest singing society in the world with over twenty five thousand members, exists throughout the northern counties, but with so little communication with aliens that the head of the music department of the state university (at Tuscaloosa just south of the mountains), an Alabamian "born and bred", told me that she had never heard of them. No one has yet dramatized the tale of the highlanders who refused to fight for the South in the war between the states, who made their homes fortresses against their neighbors below, or rode away to join the Union armies. What a melodrama lies in the story of Winston County whose citizens voted not to secede from the union and kept an independent political entity while the war raged. And what a tragedy in Winston County today, still unrepentant and defiant, still republican, unbeaten by the state's revengeful failure to provide it with adequate schools and roads. In these mountains there are no two ways about anything. Life is lived by code. Aunt Jenny Brooks would never have understood the softening of the Widow Cagle's heart in that drama of the Carolina hills, *Sun-Up,* Aunt Jenny who brought up her sons to kill the marauders who hanged their father—and took more than her share of the executions upon herself. Sometime,

perhaps, the chronicle of the long war between mountaineer and revenuer will be told, not forgetting the comedy by which opposing forces once came to amicable understanding not far from Borden Springs. But the hill-billy is taciturn. And to the explorer for drama the road into the mountains is fraught with danger.

The slope from the mountains to the plain is gradual. It is the middle-land populated for the most part by middle-people. Here the antagonism of white against black is most prevalent. It is a paradise for the white man who feels an inferiority, for he can take it out on the blacks. Here the Ku Klux ride on unlawful missions sanctioned, even led (according to Birmingham and Montgomery papers), by officers of the law. I have seen little groups of white-hooded men moving swiftly and mysteriously about in negro sections terrorizing the inhabitants. And I have beheld the white hordes gathered about the flaming cross in a scene that reminded me of a Reinhardt production.

In these foothills rises the prosperous city of Birmingham, hardly more than fifty years old, *nouveau-riche,* building its costly homes with an insolent gesture on hills of ore yet unmined. Below it, still in the red clay plain, is Tuscaloosa of state university and state asylum fame. Some are still alive who remember the comedy of courtesies when Croxton's raiding federals disturbed a wedding ceremonial there, captured the groom, and paroled him in the custody of the bride. Those same few will recall how a foolhardy commandant marshalled a handfull of white-faced school-boys and sought to defend the town from the Yankees down by the river bridge. A few shots and Croxton's men were marching into town to burn the university for reprisal. A federal lieutenant, regretting the order to burn the library, hurled one book through a window to save it from the flames—The Koran—not (as many pious Alabamians insist) the Bible.

Here, as well as in the mountains, where level land and prosperous towns might seem to assure tranquility—emotions are on hair triggers. Cultured and prominent citizens engage in fisticuffs. Devout townspeople bitterly attack professors for their un-belief or for teaching the theory of evolution. A policeman pulls a gun on little boys sneaking into a ball game. Officers raid fraternity houses for liquor with drawn revolvers. Southern college boys attempt to mob a few New York City Italian students who have

hazed one of their number. The Italians are rescued in the nick of time by police waving firearms, are given refuge in the jail and are sent home to New York. Fraternities receive threatening letters—"One of your members will be killed". Shortly afterward a negro butler finds a freshman at midnight, bound and gagged, clad in pyjamas, lying in the middle of a fraternity living-room, his skull fractured. He recovers but his memory of the last year has been completely destroyed. A thrilling mystery drama here! Always an atmosphere of excitement. Always something dramatic, something betraying the emotions of men, in other words something of the material of a play, happening.

A few miles further south and the red-gold of the dust turns to white. Below that white surface—black soil—the Black Belt! This dark and fertile land once built the pillared glories of the plantation homes, names that are poems—Rosemount, Thorne Hill, Bluff Hall, Gaineswood. Little touched by time these houses stand in a dream of the past. Too many of the surrounding acres have been sold. The old kitchens, built away from the house and connected by a covered passage, are no more. But living is still more abundant here than elsewhere in the state. Candles in the hurricane-glasses still gleam on silver goblets, and still a ham and a chicken and a roast are served with corn and okra and snap-beans, cow-peas and collard greens and sweet-potatoes, beaten biscuit and corn-bread, a salad and a watermelon, for "just a pick-up pot-luck dinner". Men who had known Washington built the Black Belt homes. They had seen Mt. Vernon and Kenmore and the other Virginia houses, and they tried to build better. Rosemount at one time boasted an elevator operated by slaves who, once the ladies and gentlemen were seated on its broad expanse, wafted them by means of ropes and pulleys to the top of the house where they might promenade on the outside balcony and survey the vast domain of which this home was the center. More dramas have been lived, are still being lived in Rosemount and her sisters than will ever be written.

It was into Livingston at the upper edge of the belt that handsome Steve Renfroe rode on his milk-white horse to free the county from carpet-bag rule. And the china-berry tree still stands to which Steve's friends in final exasperation hanged him "for his own good and the good of the county". Men in that section have

grown no more tolerant. A few months ago a white man was killed in an altercation with a negro at Emelle, about fifteen miles from Livingston. When the storm of emotion had died down six innocent negroes had been killed and the black slayer was still at large.

In 1890 Bob Sims, civil war veteran and religious fanatic, put up a sign on the highway just south of Butler, county seat of Choctaw County: "Three Miles to Bob Sims's Still". Grim times followed, ending on that Christmas day of 1891 when Bob and six of his followers were hanged to the "Christmas Tree" on a barren hill near Butler, for the awful Macmillan massacre the day before. Not grimmer though, than those of not many months ago when war among the moonshiners made Chicago stories seem dull.

Perhaps the most fascinating story of all the Black Belt, however, is that of the gallant exiled soldiers of Napoleon who sought to create a new Provençe in the Alabamian wilderness. On the white bluffs of the Tombigbee they built their cabins and, visioning a more perfect world, named their new home Demopolis. But the county they named Marengo, and the little towns about—Archola and Linden and Moscow. In Demopolis General Lefebre Desnouettes, leader of the expedition, built for himself a little cabin shrine filled with banners and trophies of the time when he served the "Little Corporal". Day by day he and his comrades worked in the new vineyards or in the olive orchards. But at night on the white bluff under the stars, gentlemen and ladies in the costumes of the French court danced to violins, drank the wines of the homeland, sang their gay French songs. A few olive trees still thrive in the gardens of Demopolis, sole living reminiscences of a gallant failure. A bridge now spans French-man's Creek where the dashing Colonel Raoul once ferried travelers while his wife, the former Marchioness of Sinbaldi and lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Italy, cooked flapjacks for them on the shore. Romantic costume drama!

At the west end of the belt lies Montgomery, cradle of the Confederacy, its history a noble tragedy that most unfittingly ends in the farce of modern Southern politics. What dramatist will rival John Drinkwater's *Lincoln* with a play on the fine sincerity of Jefferson Davis? And who will write a satire on the Websterian orators whose florid periods now mock the true dignity of the state-house, jewel of the Southern classic renaissance?

The road between Montgomery and Mobile has seen strange deeds. Rube Burroughs, Robin Hood among Alabama outlaws, despoiled the rich and gave to the poor along its track. This, too was the scene of the depredations of the famous negro outlaw, Railroad Bill, who it is said by members of his race, could assume the form of whatever animal he wished. They have made this song about him:

Railroad Bill mighty bad man
Shot all lights out brakeman's hand
Was looking fer Railroad Bill

Railroad Bill mighty big spo't
Shot all buttons off high sheriff's coat
Was looking fer Railroad Bill

Railroad Bill was worst old coon
Killed McMillan by the light of the moon
Was looking fer Railroad Bill

Below the Black Belt and in the country near Mobile live the most tragic people in America. 'Cajuns the Alabamians call them —but they are not the Acadians of Louisiana though they go by the same abbreviated name. No one has satisfactorily explained their origin. Some say they are a blending of French, Indian and Negro bloods. They deny the latter. Most of them have olive complexions, large dark eyes, wavy black hair. Given the intelligence that comes with education they would be a beautiful people. Some of them are thrifty and well-to-do citizens. Others live in weather-beaten shacks on the waste sandy lands, picking up a casual living by lumbering, working in the turpentine forests, fishing, hunting. Silent and uncommunicative among strangers, they are a gay and excitable lot by themselves and their dances, usually impromptu affairs occurring apparently from spontaneous combustion of desires for a blow-out, are noted chiefly among Alabamians for the blood-curdling shrieks and yells which accompany them. The 'Cajuns believe themselves socially the superiors of the negroes. The whites, however, will not grant them social equality. One of the results of this situation is that in 'Cajun counties there are three sets of public schools, white, 'Cajun, and negro—a system which works to the disadvantage materially of all three. The

educated 'Cajun boy, the beautiful and intelligent 'Cajun girl stand sadly in the twilight of the races, deprived of a heritage richer in color and romance than any in the nation. Tragedy stalks here.

Mobile is a dramatic poem. Five flags have flown over it and the followers of each are still eloquent in its homes and its people. One never "passes through" Mobile. The old city rests apart, not in the straight line of popular travel. And so it has maintained a quaint and exclusive charm—not unlike Charleston's though more cosmopolitan. The wrought-iron balconies rival those of New Orleans, the pillared houses those of the Black Belt. Spain and France and England and the Old South, grown harmonious through the mellowing of time, are echoes in these streets. Mardi Gras—the mad, bad time of carnival—was celebrated here for the first time in America. Here came the planter to sell his harvest, and the planter's daughter to buy her Paris wardrobe—both passengers on the *Eliza Battle,* that gorgeous packet which met so sad a fate—in devouring flame. On one of Mobile's Black Warrior bayous her sister ships, paddle-wheel steamers which once made river life gay, rest together—the grave-yard of the steam-boats.

It is not likely that, with such material, the vein of American drama will run dry. Broadway has hardly touched it. Material, of course, is not enough, as plays of this season and past seasons have proved. But so many plays of late have been made without material that it seems a good idea to emphasize it a bit. These few notes on a little known state provide material for many significant plays. They do not exhaust the supply in Alabama. And there is more in Mississippi and Georgia and Kansas and California, much more, awaiting the discoverer.

REHEARSAL

One of a number of colorful theatre-paintings by Eugene C. Fitsch exhibited at the Morton Galleries. (*Photograph by Soichi Sunami*)

Doris Ulmann

THE ODALISQUE

Few dance artists of today are so adept at achieving definite and complete significance with little and natural effort as is Angna Enters. Her theory that immobility is frequently as expressive as action is illustrated in *The Odalisque.*

Doris Ulmann

THE PAVANA

The art of Angna Enters has aroused many distinguished critics to enthusiastic approval. Her "compositions in dance form" combine beauty of movement with unusual character interpretation, directness of effect with disciplined restraint.

BARBETTE

From an etching by the Dutch artist, Van Hengelaar, formerly associated with the *Teatro degl' Indipendenti* at Rome, now a member of the Grafton Theatre Company in London.

A STAR TURN

By Velona Pilcher

HAVE you seen Barbette, the music-hall star? Barbette has been taking a turn through Europe. Have you seen him?

. . . . . When the curtains unclose she is standing at the top of black steps, a bright tall tapering body glittering against a black cloth. From her shoulders a great silver cape is trailing, from her waist a short silver skirt is spreading, on her feet are slender silver slippers, on her brow a hat like a large silver dish is balanced, and two small disks of jeweled silver are buckled across her breasts. There is music. She moves to it. Down the steps she comes stepping in a series of postures and poses, while the train of the trailing cape widens into a carpet, and the broad brim of the hat holds itself high above her movements as though carrying some foreign fruit that must not be spilled. Slowly, slimly, she exhibits her enchantments, shows herself off. With maidenly manoeuvres she conjures us to look at her, flirting with the fingers, luring with the eyelids, wooing us with attitudes that flow forward toward us weak as breaking waves . . . until at last she reascends the steps, stands on the top, and prepares for her part. Unclasping the cloth of silver from her shoulders she leaves it lying down the slope behind her, dripping downward like a cascade of caught light. Lifting the silver salver from her forehead she lays it down —as though doing something of extreme significance—and uncovers a face fragile as an egg's shell, a fair face crowned by a crop of short golden curls. Thus unburdened, bare as the stem of a silver-skirted birch tree—and as beautiful!—she sways her shapely way once more into the center of the scene.

So the turn opens. Barbette is introduced.

But where is the shine of any solid silver in these tinsel trappings, you are wondering? Are those effective attitudes anything more than unnatural affectations? And that golden hair, what is it but a wig? In short—you are saying—is there not something too

strangely self-conscious about the whole business? True, too true. But so strangely so.

The music has moved. Barbette has bounded into action. Like a coil of caught lightning a spiral of steel is unwinding its way from one black point to another across the barren stage. Shivering, shimmering, from space to space it stretches—a statement slung between two mysteries—a string of silver, slender as a spirit, onto which Barbette has sprung and is dancing. Narrow as a nerve is this line of light that rises and falls like a wave made by her walking, and narrow and nervous shines the stem that is she, as the leaves of her skirt are blown back by the wind that awakes from the weight of her walk. She is pointing. She is spinning. She is pirouetting. She is dancing on the tight-rope—See!—on only the tips of her toes! On the tips of her slippers she is tripping, she is dancing, she is delicately dancing, she is. . . . She? She? She? Are you sure she is a she? Study that bending back, I beg you. Within its frail framework the most masculine of muscles are moving like levers, folding and unfolding as if their very friction would burn away the flesh. And observe that long bone of the back, when arched at its acutest angle. Like a bow it bends backwards, bending like a bow of brass strained for the flight of an arrow of iron. Why, that cord of steel string is hardly more taut with the life leaping on it than the cord of this spine is taut with each touch of the life leaping from it. . . . Whizz! The wire whirrs. The walking-wire whips upward. Comes a sharp snap of steel, and Barbette, that bright body, is shot from the bow-string. A narrow white arrow—head tipped with gold, shaft feathered with silver—has struck the stage level, stands swaying before us. He—or—she has come back to the earth and is receiving his—or—her applause.

There is a couch to one side of the scene, lustrously sheeted like the lining of a cloud. To this Barbette caressingly crosses, relaxes upon it as though within a boudoir, and then—as if resting—rhythmically unrobes. Long brittle fingers snap off a shiny slipper, slip off a silky sock, snap off a second shiny slipper, slip off a second silky sock. This done, deftness and alertness slacken. The rhythm of the motions changes. Their medium is rising in irresolution, revolving as if solving something, turning the torso in a kind of sensuous introspection as though matter, like mind, had its meditations too. Now it is settled; deliberation ended, indecision danced down. Barbette, like a bride, loosens those leaves

of silver from the stem they have been sheathing, steps out of the silver skirt as though taking a step of infinite significance, and stands still. Statue still. Stark still. . . . Slowly from on high, like hands from heaven extended in greeting, two ropes as white as twisted snow come running, two trembling ropes each hung at the end with a heavy silver ring; and instantly toward them two arrowy arms are lifted. Striking an attitude of aspiration, Barbette's body stands for a second—bared of all burdens save a sash of silver girding up the loins and two silver circles, set with strange stones, binding down the breasts. . . . Look! . . . a leap of life! Sudden as electricity the life of man leaps into him!—and with a flash he has reached those rings and is swinging himself through space. Rings? Are these things rings? But he has torn his fingers from them and is turning them into armlets, he has flung them to his feet and is using them as anklets, he is sharpening them into spurs, he is stamping them into stirrups . . . on a set of silver stirrups he is riding astride the sky.

This is Orion straddling the heavens! This is Orion racing the stars!

Hands holding high to the reins of the ropes, legs flung afar with the stretching stirrups—a starry sash for that belt with three buckles, hands and feet tipped with flame for those four starry angles—this is that seven-pointed horseman of heaven performing his heroics, forever striding with silver footsteps up and down the sky. Up and down, and in and out, and back and forth, and high and low, Orion is cutting arcs of action out of blackness, slicing silver semi-circles through the sphere that is the space above this stage. Postures? Poses? No postures so splendid have been seen since Nijinsky, no poses so inspirited since Isadora died. Firm as a saint's faith is the flesh that can perform them, sure as steel springs are the strings under the skin of those ladylike wrists and ankles. And supple as a wave of the sea—and as strong!—is the bone of that back that drives this athlete upward after each dive head downward to the dark. A seraph seen by Dante, a brother of that bright Dawn that Blake drew—is he not a poet's vision, this he whose home is in the interstellar spaces?

Lucifer, Lucifer, son of the morning! Something is shouting, something is singing. *Leda, and Leda, daughter of light!* The rings are shouting, the rings are singing—each time the rider soars upright in the stirrups they run along his limbs like flames, meet

and make a silver saddle, come together with sound like song. *Swing low, Lord Lucifer, son of the sun! Swing high, bright Leda, lady of light!*

Six times, I think, the cymbals crashed together, and six times I saw the sparks of speech struck from their tongues of silver.

Now there is silence. The ride is over, the rider is resting, the rider is down from that high horse. Unsaddled, unstirruped, unsteeded, here is Barbette again, moving about as a maiden at her toilette, relaxing to the rhythm of a music-hall tune. The rings are rising, the ropes are reversing, with a silver stick between them. A swing? or a wing? A signal to strengthen that resting runner! With a spring like a shock from something electric, Barbette, that bright bird, is back within the blackness, drawing diagrams of aerial geometry, dancing down dimensions yet undreamed.

Two lovers in one body are cutting quick-silver through the ether, soaring, sailing, with a single wing between them; like wild live wires they are weaving constellations out of space and time. Intricate as the order of a Sapphic ode are the patterns they perform; strong as the structure of a Shakespeare sonnet is the metre they move to, riding their rhythm like sentences that rhyme. What miraculous machinery keeps them running so even with eternity? Two ropes of woven snowflakes, and a thin stick brittle as an icicle is all their sustenance we see. . . . Look! A last leap! Straight into our laps they are lunging, straight down to death they are leaping. . . . What law shall raise them? What light shall lift them? With the skill of the supernatural a toe is twisted in the trapeze just in time. A last eliptic sweep of the golden broom across the silver carpet, a last flare forward, a little spring downward . . . and the white wing flashes in freedom.

The dancers are down. The turn is done.

Barbette is bowing. The curtains close. Clapping comes, and increases, and continues into a curtain call. At last onto the barren platform steps a slight person, solitary, strangely estranged. With a bow the figure, suddenly seeming very lonely, doffs the golden wig as though saluting something, and uncovers a head the shape of an egg, crowned with a skull-cap of short black hair.

Barbette is a boy.

THE THEATRICAL OLYMPIAD IN MOSCOW

By Anna Louise Strong

THE discovery of two theatres of world significance, and of a dozen more which are important institutions in the culture of small nations, is the rather amazing achievement of a most amazing gathering—the Olympiad of National Theatres held in Moscow in early summer of 1930. The mere organization of such an Olympiad, in which a thousand actors and artists, from fifteen national theatres, displayed their art to each other, is a feat without precedent in dramatic history, and possible only in a land where the theatre is subsidized as an educational institution.

Imagine the financial aspects only—a thousand actors given six weeks vacation on pay, transported with scenery and costumes for distances averaging that from Salt Lake City to New York; three theatres commandeered for morning and evening use in which these actors put on their best plays not for a paying public, but for the delight and edification of each other and of such journalists and educators as are given tickets. For more than a month the compact program continues: at 9:30 every morning conferences on dramatic technique, leading regisseurs presenting their forms to be approved and attacked; at 11:30 the morning dramatic performance, in from one to three theatres, followed again by criticism of the methods and results. Afternoons given to excursions, inspections of stage mechanisms of famous theatres, visits to Motion Picture Factories, displays of national arts. At six o'clock the Motion Film Olympiad, in which thirty best films from ten producing companies are entered. And then the evening performances, again in three theatres, with part of the seats thrown open to the paying public, which is, however, so little considered that it can only with great difficulty obtain information of the program.

All this in the mere interest of improving standards of art among the various national theatres of the Soviet Union! There is not even the advertising value of display; a modest budget eliminates

most paid advertising in the papers, whose news columns are crowded with reports of the Sixteenth Party Congress, a major political event quite out-classing the Olympiad as news. Nor is there a prize to be attained, which the theatre may display on its return home. Anatolie Glebov, organizer of the Olympiad and himself a well known playwright, scornfully replied to the question why there were no awards that "since we are an Olympiad not of sport, but of culture, our formal 'jury report' contemplates no first and last place, but an estimate of the strong and weak points of each theatre in relation to its history and its prospects; this summary is based on thousands of signed estimates handed in at the performances".

Perhaps the mere giving of the Olympiad overshadows in importance any of the national theatres thus revealed for the first time to a wider public: "there will be future Olympiads" says Glebov, "to which we shall invite foreign representatives". Yet the plays brought in to this first Olympiad are significant expressions of national cultures. Heroic stories of Bashkir shepherds fighting the theft of their ancient pastures, of Turkish serfs revolting against fire-worshipping Zoroastrian kings, legends handed down by suppressed songs through the ages, now blaze forth from the theatres of fifteen nations to proclaim that Uzbeks, Turks, Tartars, Turcomen, Jews, Georgians, have all alike brought forth, century by century, daring, devoted fighters for freedom.

The youngest of the theatres, the Uzbek Dramatic Musical Theatre, is still in the throes of a bloody fight for existence. Its spectacle is framed by two wide red columns, one of which is half draped in black. The announcer explains that this theatre, only a few months old, has already lost three of its members by murder. Two of its young actresses, for the crime of unveiling their faces in public and participating in the dramatic performances forbidden by Mohammed, were barbarously and obscenely hacked to pieces by their fathers, husbands and the "beys", or wealthy village upholders of orthodoxy. The author of one of its dances—a rather undistinguished dance to western ears and eyes—was slain during the past spring in the struggle to organize farm collectives.

A theatre with such a fighting existence, which must select its actresses first of all for their heroic daring, is naturally handicapped in the search for such secondary qualities as beauty, grace, charm

of voice, and dramatic talent. To uninitiated westerners the Uzbek players are ugly, their voices harsh and unpleasing, their costumes brilliant and exciting rather than harmonious, and even their famous dances, brought from an historic past, seem at first rather ethnographical curiosities than aesthetic delights. Yet no nation can be regarded as devoid of characteristic art which can produce a classic dance several centuries old, with no less than sixty different rhythms all beaten out on one tambourine. Nor is any art a mere classic survival which draws its daily life from continuous tours among the collectivized farmhands of Central Asia, sharing and interpreting their struggles, delighting and inflaming them to action by the dance, the song and the drama. To anyone who has seen the cities of Central Asia, these players recreate it authentically—its blazing sun, its gaudy, shrill-voiced bazaars, its cruel buffoonery and sensual languor, shot through by the hot heroisms of the young revolutionary fighters for freedom.

In striking contrast to this young remolding of ancient song and dance was the Armenian theatre, most conservative of all participants in the Olympiad. Its regisseur boasted that the Armenian dramatic tradition goes back two centuries before the birth of Christ, an ancient glory which no other nation present attempted to emulate. Its present form, however, dates from the middle of the last century, and unlike most of the other theatres, it seems to have stayed there. It has a few very able actors, out-ranking as individuals any in the other companies in the complexity and range of human emotion they can show; but its plays are the revived, (and alas, not remodelled) dramas dealing with trickery in marriage dowries, bribery of unwilling relations, the tragic loss of a promissory note and the refusal of the creditor to honor the debt whose record is gone—themes which in the Soviet Union of today seem even more than a century out of date. The individualism of the Armenian theatre has the further unfortunate result for its ensemble, that many of its best actors slip away year by year to more attractive jobs in Moscow; one of the star dancers of the Uzbeks was strangely enough, an Armenian girl.

The contrast between the individualism of the Armenian theatre and the collectivism which is accepted as a matter of course in all the others, points up the essential difference between the theatrical organization of the Soviet Union and that which we know in

New York. In America there is seldom a continuous ensemble of players; the "play's the thing", to which new players are fitted, to be scattered when the play is done. The theatre in the Soviet Union is a permanent institution with actors on a yearly payroll, training its students for years in physical culture, dance, and the peculiar form of expression which that particular theatre has developed, sometimes from the genius of an able *regisseur* and sometimes from the interaction of the group. The plays are selected, not by box-office values or even by absolute artistic merit, but as vehicles for the special form of life and art that theatre desires to express.

Such have been the Moscow Art Theatre, the Kamerny, the Meyerhold; such are today the various national theatres springing from the newly awakened national cultures. No one who has watched the spontaneous emergence of local dramatic clubs in every factory and village in Russia since the revolution, has doubted that these crude, amateurish, propaganda-drenched theatricals were preparing the soil of a nation-wide appreciation of drama from which more significant art must spring.

The national theatres are part of that growth of national culture which has followed the policy of the Soviet Union to encourage wide cultural diversity while enforcing economic unity among the many races and peoples whom the tsar once sought to "Russify". The typical theatre of a non-Russian nationality devotes half its repertoire to modern, revolutionary plays, sometimes written by its own nationals, sometimes translated from the Russian. In the latter case, the plays are freely changed to fit new national characteristics; the entire atmosphere of *The Armored Train*, for instance, changes when it is carried from the northern plains of Siberia to the mountains of the Caucasus. About one fourth the entire repertoire is given to world classics, Shakespeare, Molière, Lope de Vega, drawn from all ages and nations and also freely remodelled to give a "modern message". The national theatre also seeks out dramatic material from old themes in its national history—peasant revolts, serfs who defied masters, the struggle of a suppressed folk against Russian imperialism. As in all Soviet drama, little place is given to the sex interest in any form. For years love and romance have ceased to be a major theme in any soviet drama.

Each nation finds themes in its history, and treats them accord-

LAMARA

Notable among European theatres expressive of the life and characteristics of the people whom they serve is the Georgian National Theatre. The Georgian Government sent its First State "Rustaveli" Theatre to the Theatre and Art Olympiad of the USSR held at Moscow last summer. There the company, under the directorship of Akhmetelli, produced *Anzor* by Shanshiashvili (after *The Armored Train* by Ivanov) and *Lamara* by G. Robakidze, a play based on a folk-tale of life among the mountaineers in ancient times. An exciting moment in the latter drama is shown above.

Davidachiski as Mindia, Lamara's lover, in the Georgian National Theatre's production of *Lamara*

Ituloukidzé in the name part of *Lamara*, produced by the Georgian National Theatre.

SHEEP'S WELL

The Jewish Theatre of White Russia, with its production of an adaptation of Lope de Vega's *Sheep's Well,* shared honors with the Georgian National Theatre at the Moscow Olympiad. No two production styles could have been more unlike. While the Georgians excelled in dynamic power and the poetry of movement, the Jewish Theatre by the use of ungainly grotesquerie, succeeded in transmitting the underlying and fundamental emotions of the human soul. The wedding celebration from *Sheep's Well* is shown in the above photograph.

ing to its genius. The Bashkir shepherds of the southern Urals—a despised race of whom it was said: "After a diseased man will a Russian peasant drink, but not after a healthy Bashkir"—portray the struggle of those days when the triumphant Russian overlords disposed of Bashkir lands for a few kopeks an acre to their sycophants and followers, while the shepherd population, dispossessed by alien law of lands which nature had given them for generations, organized illegally, struggled and were suppressed. The real villain of this piece, against whom real hate is directed, is not the Russian overlord, who is shown with little animus as a pale-faced aloof "imperialist", but rather the fat, greedy Bashkir who curries favor with the overlord and buys up the lands of his own people for a song. Something of the hate felt towards the modern "kulak" creeps into this piece; and something of the hate one can imagine if a drama should arise among American Indians, based on the expropriation of their lands and the selling out of their rights by alienated, corrupted natives.

The Turks of the Baku Oil region go back a thousand years for the theme of their best-known drama— the *Bride of Fire*. In the ninth and tenth century three powers contested this land: the ancient Zoroastrians, worshipping fire by human sacrifice; the advancing Mohammedans from the south; the local temporal rulers scheming for power between these giants. Against this three-fold oppression arose Il Han, a serf, leading a serf's revolt at first successful and then suppressed. The "bride of fire" is a woman of famous beauty, whose part is that of peace-offering to the serf, and of rejected temptation. Gorgeous stuff this for a powerful historical drama; whether the possibilities were realized I cannot say, for when I visited the Turkish Theatre to see it, I found the *Bride of Fire* replaced for a night by *Hamlet*—a version in which Polonius becomes an Eastern satrap, Ophelia a gauzily veiled Oriental damsel, and the ghost no wraith of a tormented mind, but a solid, kingly apparition in a silvery spot-light. The acting was not bad, but I left early, being particular in Hamlets.

In fact, I often left early, even when I found the piece well acted. Even creditable drama becomes exhausting when performed in fifteen languages, none of which one understands. An act or two is enough to observe settings, methods, to collect the programs which give, in Russian, the national themes. It was clear that

even the least distinguished theatres were worthy achievements of their national culture, and sometimes even the creators of that culture. As, for instance, in the little Marii Republic, with only a few tens of thousands of pre-Christian pagan folk, of Finnish extraction, which two years ago got their first alphabet, primer, and drama simultaneously, and who today are gazing with avid eyes on their more advanced brothers in the Olympiad, and clearly acquiring ten years of culture each day.

It was also clear, even without the medium of language, that one oft-repeated theme ran like a red thread through all the national theatres—the refrain that we, we, we also, we Uzbeks, Turks, Tartars, Jews, Turcomen, Georgians, have known in the past oppression and bred from our loins heroes who struggled for freedom, till now our struggle merges with the greater struggle of all the workers of the world. Thus the long suppressed pride of race and nation is aroused and at the same time blended into a wider loyalty to the Soviet Union. Whether they deal with the present or the national or classic past, these theatres are clearly worth to the Soviet State the subsidies they get.

In two of the theatres, however, one did not leave after the first act. Two of the theatres were able to transcend the barrier of language and alien race, and to create art of a universal significance which gave even sophisticated Moscow a new thrill. These are the Georgian State Theatre, directed by Akhmetelli, based on the dynamic of a powerful flowing motion, with dramatic action in three dimensions; and the Jewish State Theatre from White Russia, under Rafalski, whose genius infuses a strong significant emotion into the grotesque indignities of daily life. Both these theatres are going abroad; one prays they may come back less affected by their foreign sojourn than some others.

To see the Georgian Theatre play either *Anzor,* or *Lamara,* is to feel an authentically new aesthetic emotion. Most of this is lost in photographs of the Georgian performance, for it comes chiefly from the beauty of powerful continuous motion in rhythms so graceful that they at once convict all civilized non-Georgian bodies of dishonorable flabbiness and creaky old age. The Georgian bodies, one feels, like to leap up six feet of crags as a mere emphasizing period to a sentence; and the scenery, purely constructivist, is designed to give them crags up which they may leap. Like the Georgian hills, this scenery reaches to the sky in irregular

masses; like the Georgian valleys, it descends through the orchestra pit to the depths of earth. At no time does a Georgian actor take two steps on a level; each step goes sharply up or down and is made with a light grace or swift force which creates drama.

When Akhmetelli is called by would-be admirers the "Georgian Meyerhold" or the "Georgian Stanislavsky", he with difficulty hides the scorn of the true Georgian who disdains to be a copy of anything Russian. The graceful, powerful movement of his dramas, says Akhmetelli, is not derived from either the Russian dance, nor the physical culture craze of Meyerhold; it is the natural Georgian gait developed by the mountains and the Georgian costume. He explains that the Georgian costume of tightly fitted upper jacket, and leg-tight boots, make a body whose movements cannot be flabby and indirect, and whose gait is rather a springing dance than a walk, turning about the two tightly fixed points of the body. The Georgian mountain life, where progress is always up and down over irregular rocky trails, produces also an accuracy of motion unknown to dwellers on a flat, expanding plain. Akhmetelli claims that all past Georgian drama, which copied the Russian traditions, failed to arouse response among the real Georgian hill folk, since its movements were alien to their own.

If I lay undue stress on sheer physical movement, it is because Akhmetelli himself claims that this characteristic Georgian movement is the "dynamic" underlying his art. Yet the Georgian theatre plays not pantomime, but real dramas, writing some and adapting others. Their presentation of *The Armored Train,* first given by the Moscow Art Theatre, is inferior to the latter in psychology, but far superior as a dramatic spectacle, for which, incidentally, it is better adapted. At the close of its third act, an American professor of drama said to me: "Never on any stage have I seen such a gorgeously dramatic spectacle. That act alone was worth coming to Moscow for".

What was this act? It was played, in the first place, on at least fourteen different levels, all slightly sloping—the so-called "flat roofs" of a Georgian mountain village, connected with each other by irregular ladders, and entered by door-ways from still higher houses. The roofs become the setting for the musings of the aged father of the guerrilla chief and the village musician, for the gay

chaffing of the village girls, for the sudden return of the warriors, and the calling of a delegate conference from many tribes.

On this background which fills the theatre solidly from beneath the orchestra pit almost to the ceiling, a succession of gorgeous pictures succeed each other. The distant shout and entrance of a Mussulman delegate, hereditary enemy whom a hot-headed youth offers to slay, but who is now drawn by common misery into a common cause; the capture and conversion of a British soldier, and the intensely serious and very funny pantomime by which the rising of the proletariat is shown to a man who cannot understand the language; the shooting of an unsuccessful warrior for his cowardly return; these follow each other in fiercely passionate drama. Such tours de force as the falling of the dying man down three roofs brought gasps of admiration and proved conclusively the superb physical training of these Georgians if any had been left to doubt it. The dance on the tiny roof-tops, each crowded to its edge with women in flowing silk head-shawls, and men with black enveloping "burkas", the passing, stamping, the tossing of the burkas through the air, the dust arising to the sky from the beating of feet—all this remains a picture of a stage more completely and satisfactorily filled from floor to roof in all its dimensions by a changing yet ever harmonious pattern than one could ever have thought possible before seeing these Georgians. They are going abroad next year; they should create a sensation.

For the first two weeks of the Olympiad the Georgians were the most acclaimed theatre in Moscow; thereafter they shared honors with the newly arrived Jewish Theatre from White Russia, the second theatre which by common consent is held to have "world significance". If the Georgians were supreme in grace, pictorial and dramatic quality of motion, this Jewish theatre excels through its ability to take awkward, grotesque village life, and transfigure it by sheer depth of soul expressed through the awkward grotesqueness. I saw them in Lope de Vega's classic *Sheep's Well* with which they have taken marked liberties, eliminating the forgiving king who is reconciled with his peasants, making the brutal aristocrat a typical oppressor, slain, not in personal revenge, but in a serfs' revolt, and conferring on the village *Sheep's Well* in the end a collective consciousness which was quite foreign to the Middle

Ages. So are the classics done over to suit the present mood of class revolution.

None the less it is convincing drama, creating its own art method. If the Georgians found the "dynamic" of their drama in the movement of the human body, the Jews of White Russia find it in the movement of the human soul, under the uncouth forms of life. One cannot imagine the Georgians admitting that life can be awkward or that love can be expressed otherwise than by gracefully fitting gesture. But the Jewish village girl expresses love by butting her swain in the middle of his back with her curly black head, and jumping away; the youth tells his father of his love, and they express mutual joy by rough gestures of hitting at each other with fists; yet somehow, through these movements, the tenseness of feeling communicates itself. There follows, with swift emotional changes, the sun-lit wedding dance when the girl's awkwardness vanishes in her one moment of splendor as she leads the dance of the villagers and is guyed with homely jests; the falling back of the crowd as the bride's mother and the two fathers step forth to dance, ungainly, rheumatic, but with sheer joy over their children's happiness infusing the aged limbs with some of the forgotten grace of youth; the coming of the lord of the manor and his callous abduction of the bride amid the protests, quickly cowed, of the villagers; the broken peasants of *Sheep's Well,* admitting themselves sheep, and feebly resenting their own cowardice; the return of the girl, half-fainting under her shame, fiercely disowning her sheep-like father and neighbors as she rouses them to revolt; last of all, the attack, the slaying of the lord, then the decision of the peasants that no one man, but *Sheep's Well* did the deed.

Such is the stuff of this drama, in which a flock of frightened, scattered sheep becomes the collective consciousness of the village *Sheep's Well.* The swift changes of emotion are pointed up not only by dance but by architecture, music, light, and construction,—all of these used without concessions to naturalism, merely to heighten dramatic values. That the sun should blaze forth with sudden brightness as the wedding dance begins, that heavy twilight should fall as trouble approaches, that candle-lights at a dozen levels should flash a fitful lightning to illuminate battle and slaying—these are the conscious use of day and night to heighten human emotions, as nature should, but too often doesn't. Similar

is the use of the orchestra to emphasize the emotional quality of a pause by two or three notes—a trick long since used by the Kamerny theatre.

Both the Georgian and the Jewish Theatre boast of young actors, "all new since the revolution". But both fought their way by conscious struggle out of the past. The first Georgian Theatre, as reorganized after the revolution, contained a dozen dramatic tendencies, several directors, and all types of actors. Akhmetelli refused professional actors, taking only young, enthusiastic students, whom he fired with his ideas. The production of his first piece in the new method caused a rupture within the Georgian Theatre, and the foundation of his group as a new State Theatre.

Rafalski, "art leader" of the Jewish Theatre, does not treat with such aloof scorn as Akhmetelli the suggestion that his theatre has borrowed from others of the past. "Our theatre has existed for eight years" he told me. "None of our actors is a former professional actor; they are children from children's homes of famine days, and young folks from workers' clubs. The average age is twenty-three; before the revolution they never saw a theatre, and many of them never travelled on a railway train. During our first four years we were a studio in Moscow, studying the methods of all the great directors. For the past four years we have been an independent state theatre in White Russia, creating our own method from the life around us. Even today we have no connection with any box-office; we give only 'closed spectacles' to workers' clubs, collective farms and other organizations".

Most of these younger theatres have little use for the measured naturalism and careful psychology of the Moscow Art Theatre, which they regard as hopelessly old-fashioned.

"It is time for us Moscow folk to realize that leadership has passed from us to the provinces" said one of the Moscow actors in the discussion following *Sheep's Well*. "All over the land there are new streams of living drama. What a pity that the three great producers of Moscow—Stanislavsky, Tairof, Meyerhold, are all abroad at present, instead of being here to see their former students who have now an independent life". . . . Perhaps, however, those three masters of drama, now welcomed abroad, did not consider it a pity to be absent from the Olympiad. For the new, expanding life of the national theatres of the Soviet Union has little reverence.

I LOOK AT THE THEATRE

By PAUL NASH

I WAS just wondering what in the world I had to say about the Theatre whichever way I looked at it, when I came upon the admirable article contributed to this series by my friend Richard Nevinson. At first it was reassuring to find that Nevinson's total of visits to the play was even a little lower than my own. On the other hand his acquaintance with members of the Profession was in all respects so far more extensive, varied and interesting than mine, that I was forced to admit he held the advantage. This I would have conceded with a good grace, but the further discovery that most of the sentiments I might have expressed on the subject of the Theatre had already been expressed by Nevinson with considerably more force and lucidity than I have at my command, was something not easy to forgive.

It was at this point I suddenly remembered a fact that the English theatre has allowed me to forget, that I am, or at least was, a designer for the theatre. I do not mention this with any bitterness; it is now more than five years since Gordon Craig urged me to "come into the theatre" and I excused myself on the ground that I wished to be a painter. "But there are so many", argued Craig. Impossible to refute such logic; I turned from that persuasive tongue. I cannot say I have regretted my obstinacy. Yet there was an earlier time when the smallest practical encouragement to develop the keen interest I then had in designing for the stage would have turned all my energies in that direction. But—speaking generally—the English theatre prefers to keep the artists outside, and so it is from outside that I, an English artist, look at the English theatre.

When I speak of outside the theatre, I do not mean to convey the idea of a remote eminence from which the theatre may be critically spied upon, but just outside—on the other side of the street. From there one may see at almost any hour of the morning on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, or at any time of the afternoon on all the other days of the week, that astonishing

phalanx of waiting bodies, planted on their feet or seated on narrow stools, chattering, munching, chewing and smoking for hour after hour, until they are permitted to start shuffling, pressing and clambering up or down, to rest on slightly wider but not softer supports for their aching feet and bottoms—to be rewarded by what? What, in heaven's name, can there be to make this dreadful masticating purgatory worth while? That is the question I frequently ask myself; for to me the most remarkable quality of the English theatre is the patience of its audience. But it is not only patient outside, its patience lasts all through every performance, and that is not merely remarkable, it is considerably depressing.

There can be only two interpretations of this deadly patience of English audiences; either they simply do not care, or they are incapable of discrimination. Personally, I believe in the latter explanation, and I am convinced this is an important negative factor influencing English drama. The English people are not a discriminating people in matters of art. This is obvious in so many instances of history as well as in contemporary life. The public, literally, does not know a good thing from a bad one. It may "spot" a good thing, it may even support it, but alas it will be just as enthusiastic over something quite worthless. In short, it is without taste—aesthetically.

Now a good deal of nonsense has been talked and written about what the public wants. Actually, I believe, the public only wants to be what is called "taken out of itself". That is to say, it goes to shows musical, theatrical, cinematograph or picture (in the "legitimate" sense) to escape from the obsession of ordinary life, and, according to its palate—whether it likes something sweet, hot, subtle or sour—it seeks out its relish. One cannot say more for the public "want" than that at the outset. What the public may swallow, even digest, in the course of its tasting is another matter. The initial want of the public is a question, more or less, of sensation. With this mild craving is allied the gregarious instinct, the instinct to herd together into a confined space, and the lately developed but equally strong instinct to form a queue. These, then, are the crude elements the showman has to deal with. What does he create out of them?

It seems to me the showmen of the theatre make two great mistakes. First, in being afraid of the public, and then in underestimating the public's ability to appreciate a good thing just as

much as a bad thing. The result is, to continue the metaphor, a seldom relaxed *régime* of what the showmen understand as wholesome English fare, which, without being either stimulating or quite poisonous, can be calculated to induce a comfortable coma. On the other hand there are, as it were, some quite distinguished chefs among the caterers. It cannot be said the theatre provides nothing but old English fare. Some of the very oldest continental dishes find their way to the London table. France, Germany, Russia, all provide—in time. Even the East is served up—rather wilfully perhaps—a few greens with the chop suey—but who cares so long as he can pick his teeth with a chop stick. It is the illusion of atmosphere that counts.

Of the crank showman, the great food faddist who is always dressing up one thing to look like another or decanting old wine into new bottles, I should prefer not to speak. Besides, his day is over. What interests me, in a psychological sense, is the "artistic" proprietor, the daring innovator, the tit-bit merchant, and it is with him that I, as an artist, feel most at variance. His "game" more particularly is the creating of the scene—the sight for sore eyes. He must convince, where costume plays are concerned, that when people spoke and acted thus it was in such clothes and in such a place; and more, that only in such clothes and in such a place could people speak and act so. That is the simple problem. Beyond that lies the ideal of "art" production, whereby every line and form, every shadow and shaft of light heightens the intensity of the play so that the separate dramas of mass, colour, movement and sound become an indissoluble unity. Very few performances achieve so much, but there have been some. Very few men are capable of creating in these terms, but here and there have been—are still—a few. It is not of these I am thinking. This article must concern itself with what happens every day, not once in a blue moon.

Entertainment in England may be said to lie in the hands of two groups. The actor-manager-producer group which gives us the plays, and the showmen group which provides the "shows". The former contains a few inspired, some intellectual, and many just clever producers. It is responsible for a few good plays and an incalculable amount of rubbish. The showmen, on the other hand, have a better average since they put on the revues and musical comedies, and there are very few London revues which are not

at least amusing and thoroughly efficient for what they set out to do. For the rest, there are the stunts: stunt spectacular, stunt Shakespeare—*Midsummer Night's Dream* as a Panto, *Hamlet* in modern dress, etc.; also the Foreign Body stunt—Guitry season, Pirandello players, Japanese players, All Black Casts, etc., etc. Lastly there is the Period Revivalist show, or the Good Old Days come to life. Now my contention is that in nearly every instance of recent productions in London—excepting Cochran's and other revues, Noel Coward's musical comedies, a few of Peter Godfrey's Gate Theatre shows, and such plays as Komisarjevsky has had a hand in—the showman or producer has failed more through lack of courage than lack of vision. I am inclined to think vision has often fired the enterprise but funk soon set in—someone said: "My dear fellow the public won't stand for it, you'll never get away with it, it's Highbrow". After that, of course, there was nothing to do but compromise. Only the Music Hall dares to do the job thoroughly. Only Ernie Lotinga has the courage of his preposterous convictions.

Let me relate a recent experience to give an instance of what I mean. One may generalise for any length but sooner or later it becomes necessary to state a concrete case. In doing so I should like to begin with an apology to Sir Nigel Playfair, by whose courtesy I saw the play in question. I did not go to scoff, I went partly upon a strong recommendation, partly out of curiosity to see how an idea, which had occurred to me five years ago, had been realised by another mind, unaware of this coincidence. I refer to *The Importance of Being Earnest* recently produced at Hammersmith by Sir Nigel remembering his *'nineties* assisted by a young designer—who was not then born—and "a slight reference to Aubrey Beardsley". Now surely here was a chance to have some fun.

Yet, even as I read the naïve note on my programme, my spirits sank. It betrayed itself at once as a wobble. On the one side, Sir Nigel's reminiscences; on the other, a slight reference to Aubrey Beardsley—with the young designer doing his best, I was sure. My worst fears were realised. The young designer had heard or seen that Beardsley was a decorative "black and white" artist, given to a more or less curvilinear expression. But would not black and white look rather uncompromising? So why not black and silver? Well, then one could scarcely make the actors

and actresses look like Beardsley drawings come to life—especially the actors, who would probably object; so Sir Nigel remembered a few male costumes of the period—in exact detail sometimes—and the ladies (except Miss Prism, who was frankly "comic", and Lady Bracknell, who was frankly "period") were put into costumes which looked like a plucky attempt by bright young people to pass muster at a hurriedly arranged "Beardsley party". I waited dumbly for the garden scene. I confess I liked Cicely's dress, but why, I wondered, unbend from that stern resolve to realistic imitation white roses—with black leaves, I should add—growing in white pots with black stripes? And so it proceeded, this presentation of a fantasy or of a period comedy of manners, as you will, with perfect impartiality. Now in costumes of the day, now with slight reference to poor Aubrey. Now why?

Why, as I asked a very distinguished actress afterwards, should not either of two methods have been adopted? Either a fantasy with scenes and costumes as Beardsley might have designed them—every character could have been found in his drawings, the very rose garden even. Colour need not have been excluded, the few pale blues and yellows Beardsley sparingly employed could have been used with effect with a predominating black and white. With some little wit and imagination what a pleasantly improbable scene might have been made! Or, why not produce the play frankly in contemporary costume and setting, as a period comedy of manners, as no doubt Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* or *Private Lives* will be played in twenty years' time? "Because", said the distinguished actress, "the public would not understand. Only you and your friends would appreciate it". She had said it. Not, as I think, the truth, but the great theatrical illusion. The conviction that the public can be trusted only to grasp the understatement of an idea, the compromise, rather than the full expression. Is this so, I wonder? If the public is uncritical, cannot that be turned to advantage—the advantage of art? And, after all, is the public quite so uncritical? Is it, perhaps, just sheer politeness, or even despair, which actuates that immeasurable patience?

JAVANESE DANCING

The Spirit and The Form

By André Levinson

THE Asiatic dance, as a generic form, extends over a vast territory, spreading from Africa into Europe, its infinite variety of expressions having a certain semblance of unity. The natural affinity of races, the conquests, migrations, and intermarriages of tribes, the expansion of religions, the spread of ideas, and of symbols — have all tended to create similarities between different forms, effacing the dividing lines and bringing extremes closer together. A single example will suffice to illustrate this point. The great current of Buddhism, though it undergoes a perpetual metamorphosis, yet serves to link the Indian peninsula to Japan and the South to the North-East, so that the five hundred and five Buddhas of the stupa of Borobudur correspond to the same ideal conception and the same plastic data as the great Daibutsu of the temple of Kamakura. We should have to follow the same itinerary, if we were tracing the common traits of those oases of the dance which lie scattered through the Malay Archipelago and along the shores and the islands of the Pacific. Passing from the Kraton of Jokjakarta, with a call at Rangoon, to the Royal Palace of Pnom Pen, we should end by finding in the theatres and academies of Tokyo the confirmation of a blood relationship between the canons and plastic conventions of the Javanese *Wayang Wong*, the *Pwe* of Burma, the Cambodian ballets, and the Japanese *Noh* plays. When once we have established this relationship, however, and satisfied the spirit of analogy, it is proper to look for and define the original character of each of these dialects of the language of form, the details and not the generalities, the points in which various modes of dance differ from, instead of resembling, each other.

What concerns us here is not any of the problems of human geography, nor the hypotheses of archaeologists on the origin of styles, but the features of a living dance, of the saltatory act in

Mas Madjadjawa, Javanese dancer, in the *Janaka,* a warrior dance described by André Levinson in this issue.

Another of the Javanese dances performed by Mas Madjadjawa is that of *Semar.* In this he dances the role of a *ksatria,* foppish oriental courtier.

SEMAR

Two poses assumed by Mas Madjadjawa as a *ksatria* in the Javanese dance of *Semar* which is described in André Levinson's article in this issue. (*Photographs by Waléry, Paris*)

itself, the morphology and syntax of attitudes, steps and groupings. All of this as it expresses itself in Java, a land rich in beauty, destined by its insular isolation, the luxuriance of its sub-tropical vegetation, and the persistent virtues of the aboriginal race, to beget marvelous and ephemeral flowerings of art, of which the monuments and ruins remain, but the genius of which has no longer any living outlet save in the productions of the minor arts, in colors and ornaments, and above all in the sovereign elegance and measured graces of its hieratic, courtly, and classic dance.

Some brief preliminary notes are necessary to elucidate the composite and apparently paradoxical character of Javanese choreography as of its entire civilization. It has been the fate of this people to submit time and again to invasion and always to survive its invaders. Its mysterious history follows a regular law of alternation. The sudden and splendid rise of its cities is followed by a decline no less rapid, by a complete collapse. Then a new burst of creative power breaks out at some other point of the island, followed by another exhaustion. And then the jungle creeps into the august ruins and claims them! Borobudur with its galleries of reliefs, Tjandi-Prambanan, and at least ten other sanctuaries are just such Towers of Babel, memorials of the feverish activity of the Hindu genius, intoxicated with the perfumes of this island of the Blessed. Later the Islamic avalanche sweeps over the island, the usurers of China cater to the luxury of its princes, and the domination of the Dutch robs them of their power. The Malay undergoes these successive vicissitudes without losing his racial integrity; conflicting cultures do not impair his nature. In this supple passive resistance the climate is his ally. Everything sweeps over him and still he survives; he submits but he never succumbs. And it is this unchanging core which we must discover under the changing aspects which he borrows or to which he seems to yield.

We must not be misled by the amazing fact that Javanese dancing is, under the law of Mohamet, a prolongation and a modification of Hindu, Buddhistic, or Shiva-istic art, although remoulded by the recrudescence of primitive animism, the natural religion of the Malay race. European colonization and the pacific rule of the Dutch seem to have favored this restatement of styles and creeds and to have given free scope to a resurrection of immemorial habits which, however repressed, persist ineradicably.

But the key to Javanese dancing is not in sculptured monuments,

in the composition of reliefs, and the attitudes of statues. Not at all. The idol of stone and the living statue emanate from the same spirit and reproduce the same consecrated rites. They obey the same general laws of rhythm and symmetrical balance, which are the function of all plastic harmonies. But if living bodies and stone bosses, flexible muscles and carven stone, bear the same spiritual imprint, it does not follow that they react on each other; each activity, each mode of expression, develops according to its own nature. Furthermore: a striking example shows us how Javanese statuary, or rather sculpture-relief, is preceded by a theatrical art even more indigenous than the dance, namely, the *Wayang-Kulek,* or shadow-plays. The reliefs of Tjandi-Panataran, a sanctuary built about 1200 A. D. on the eastern side of the Island, imitate the figures of articulated puppets, flat silhouettes cut out in curved and indented shapes. These heroic and supernatural puppets might well be the model and the source of the *Wayang-wong* (or *orang*), which are musical dramas or sacramental plays performed by living dancers. These two-dimensional puppets, made out of *kulek* (buffalo) hide, colored, and covered with figures, designed in profile and in proportions skilfully distorted, attain to a high degree of stylization. In their attractive and multi-colored actuality they are seen only by the women who sit behind the screen. The men, seated in front of it, see but the immaterial *shadow*, the black and white adumbration, thrown on the screen. The wooden dolls of the *Wayang-golec* are already an attenuation of the purity of linear abstraction; they have volume and mass; and as for the human actors of the *Wayong-wong,* their evolutions may be described as a crude, earthly imitation of the minutely ordered movements of these hyper-marionettes, themselves so untainted by any touch of realism. Among the Javanese it is not the puppet that imitates Man, it is Man that emulates the articulated rigidity of a marionette. It has even been said that pantomime arose only in the eighteenth century from the shadow-plays. Born of the spirit of the *Wayang-Kulek,* it is a rough enlargement of it, and also a feebler, more degenerate development, indicative of a concession, a weakening of the imaginative faculty.

However this may be, the musical ritual adopts the principle of the marionette. It employs the ministrations of a *dalang,* a reciter and singer, who is also an exegetic scholar, a rhapsodist

thoroughly familiar with that cycle of heroic epics, legendary moralities, and chivalric romances, which we know as the Mahabarata and the Ramayana—that golden legend of gods, genii, kings, and heroes, which is the nursery tale of the Javanese child. To this repertory of subjects drawn from Hindu epics are added local traditions and the recounting of the great deeds of Malay wars. The dance draws on the same sources: it is supported and timed by the same melodies of the *gamelang,* an orchestra of xylophones and gongs and metal plates, which underlines the dominant accents of the tale. The dance festivals at the courts of the sultans of Solo and Jokjakarta, the coronation ceremonies, the solemn receptions and homages to the sovereign, all offer the perfection, the sublimation of the principles and methods employed by the professional mimes.

But it is high time to define the plastic and dynamic features, the mechanism and the amplitude of this dance, the configuration in space and time of the movements and rests of the dancer. At the outset we find ourselves at the antipodes of every Occidental notion of the dance. In Europe, whether in the theatre or in the fields, the dancer, trained or untutored, glides, leaps, whirls, and displaces air. The Javanese dance knows neither extension nor elevation; it is pre-eminently *static;* it is a figure walk, punctuated with stops, or—better yet—a succession of rests linked by transitions, a sequence of equilibriums. The gestures and displacements of the body are so many phases in the metamorphosis of a statue. There is no soaring in space, no urge, but a measured unfolding and travelling of the gesture in a tempo that is always slow—*adagio.* It is the same aesthetic of deliberation, the attribute of everything noble, which we find in the classic *pas de deux* of the French ballet. This grave and constrained procession of women dancing the Court measure, harnessed in the sarong and in long ceremonial robes with trains, is accomplished on the bare soles of the feet; the foot is slightly cramped, it grips the ground, the heel is never raised nor the foot pointed; it is flat, as we see it in the Assyrian warriors or Egyptian statues; in the rests, the toes are bent and the ball of the foot is rounded. The knees are constantly crossed, inflected in a half-bend and turned out, so that we see the ankles and feet in profile. The body, in an oblique plane, is retracted, so to speak, from the line of gravity. It is only in completing a phrase or in

emerging from the dance that the dancer rises and resumes a natural position. And, while the base of the moving statue travels or pauses, the torso and the arms execute about the vertical pivot a wide play of curves, twistings, and contortions. When the dancer is seated in the placid attitude of the Buddha, in the consecrated pose of meditative absorption common to the idols of Borobudur, the Egyptian scribes of the Old Empire, and the humblest cobbler of present-day Cairo, with the knees open and the base of the legs gathered under them, the body forms an isosceles triangle of which the apex is the head. Of all the attitudes which the human figure can assume, this is the most stable, because it rests on the longest horizontal. When the dancer rises to move in the manner described, the triangle rests on a trapezoid as its pedestal. At certain points of the drama, when the mimic action rises to the pathetic, in battle scenes when the rage of Arjuna—the hero without fault or fear—or of some other god or paladin of legend breaks out, the vertical emerges; the dancer towers erect, straining on the tips of his toes. He moves sideways in little narrow steps, or assumes the one large, free posture permitted by Javanese dancing. He raises his thigh, the bent knee rises to the height of the waist, and the sole of the foot, still held horizontal, seems about to trample on the horde of the enemy.

Meanwhile, the hands, the arms, and the head execute a series of movements—the syllables, words, and locutions of the plastic language—formulae which conform strictly to ancestral tradition and intangible conventions. The conformation of these gestures, the play of muscular contractions and relaxations—rigidity alternating with flexibility—are of the most perfect cohesion in their linear design. In their vocabulary there are several categories or groups. There are, first of all, the *functional* movements. One arm illustrates, relates, or weaves a spell. The other holds the balance, opposing or harmonising with it; or else the arm opens and is extended, while the head is thrown back in the opposite direction, and the shoulder is either thrust forward or drawn in, to maintain the demands of equilibrium. Then there are the stylized gestures describing every-day life and imitating specific actions, such as the use of arms or the playing of the flute. And finally there are the ritual gestures: gestures of oath-taking, offerings, devotion, or greeting.

There is an order of gestures which interpret natural objects,

such as the calyx of a flower unfolding or the spreading of a peacock's tail. There is the gesture of manipulating the scarf tied around the waist and making the two ends float or waving them lightly. There are especially the gestures of the hands, what the Greeks called *chironomia*, and those of the fingers—*dactylogy*, or digital science. Now, the ensemble of these subtly differentiated gestures, the manner in which the back of the hand is presented or the fingers assembled and made to touch, is clearly borrowed from the *moudras* or Buddhist formulae. But the gestures which have a sacred and esoteric character in the statues in the niches of Borobudur—the oath of Buddha, swearing by Earth, or his appeal to Heaven, or the gesture with which he reveals his wisdom—these cease to be *signs* for the Javanese and become mere *forms*. Their ideal content has vanished; their plastic prestige persists. They have become beautiful gestures, ornaments or *fioritura* phrases. We find them usually—as modulations or ritournelles—at the end of a phrase or a strophe of the poem or dance. From a mystic experience they have become an aesthetic fact.

The soul of India "moves through a forest of symbols". For the Oriental all reality is only an illusion of the senses, Mahayama, or an illusion to some metaphysical entity, a reference to the Great Beyond. The soul of Java, on the contrary, delights in its earthy paradise. That is why its *sacred* dance has become *secular*. Once religious, it is now courtly. Human esteem has superseded the cult of the divine. But more than ever it is compact of duty and obligation; personality abdicates and is abolished. Court etiquette, *savoir-vivre,* the deportment of a gentleman subordinating his feudal pride to the respect he owes his sovereign—such are the privileged features of this aristocratic art. A meticulous protocol supplants the fervor of a religious rite. For, in Java, the dance is a *royal* pastime. In the precincts of the *kraton,* the royal residence (or heart of the palace), it is the princes of the blood, the brother or cousin of the Sultan of Jokjakarta who teach the children of the grandees the secrets and the artifices of the dance, an art not of player-folk but (as it was in Versailles) a privileged employment, a highly esteemed social grace and a discipline of body and mind indispensable to all who are born 'somebody', as they said under the Old Regime.

M. Mas Madjadjawa, for instance, a most admirable artist whose

manner and technic I had ample opportunity of studying, while I was preparing a lecture delivered with his collaboration before the Sorbonne, is the son of a magistrate of ancient and noble lineage; he is related on his mother's side to an old family of Portuguese Creoles. From his tenderest youth he was trained to the exercise of the dance and rocked with the songs of epic fairy tales. His double culture—for he has learned European languages and music —has further whetted and heightened his sense of Javanese beauty.

There are two manners of dancing in Java—in *force* or in *finesse*. The *raden* Mas Jodjana, a very remarkable dancer of the school of Solo, who has appeared in Paris, represents the heroic and monumental, (powerful) manner; the very type of his face, with its breadth and its prominent cheekbones, corresponds to that style. M. Mas Madjadjawa, who studied in the school of Jokjakarta, embodies, in a masterly manner, the spirit of *finesse*; and the design of his brow and profile corresponds to the character of serene wisdom and reticent grace as we see it in Javanese iconography.

In the dances of this artist we may study more closely two or three manifestations of this style. The *Janaka* is a warrior dance, a simulated combat or Pyrrhic step. The dancer wears a jewelled helmet; the amulet in the form of a triple crescent, which he wears about his neck, is a Buddhist symbol. The velvet breeches, the long-scarf with the colors of the clan to which the fictitious character belongs, the anklets, are all elements fixed by the convention of costume. He imitates in turn the hurling of the spear over the edge of the shield, the bending of the bow, the aiming and shooting of the arrow, the brandishing of the axe—all with imaginary accessories. The only real arm which he carries, the curved dagger or *kris,* remains in his belt. In the heat of the invisible *mélée* he wheels in mid-air, facing the enemies—gods, demons, or apes—who surround him on all sides. He fights, but at the same time he braves the foe with a warlike pantomime of pride and provocation. His gestures redouble—first to the left, then to the right; and then he flings his balance once again to the opposite side.

Another character incarnated by M. Mas Madjadawa is not a figure of Buddhistic legend but a national one. This is Semar, a playful genius, a divine clown and sardonic mountebank. He is a burlesque, boisterous, and hilarious being, who is also a singularly

powerful one, far more so than mythical warriors like the Dewas or the Pandjawa, and a veritable Proteus who assumes every imaginable shape and disguise. We see him first in the form of a *ksatria,* an Oriental courtier, imitating the haughty gait, the beautiful gestures, the mannered manipulations, the turns of the wrist, the roundings of the arms, the half turns of the neck, the whole turns repeated until the helmeted head rolls, the peacock gestures painting the gloriole of the pretty dandy—"preening" himself, as we would say. The dance is without a scenario, it is not a dramatic episode but a mere parade of deportment. The dancer begins by the royal salute, the salaam on bended knee. Then he turns on his axis, lightly tapping the floor with his bare feet and waving his scarf lightly. The white mask of the *ksatria* adds to the impassive and impersonal grandeur of the character and completes its resemblance to some animated outline of the theatre of flat puppets.

We meet Semar in another dance, this time in his natural form as a malformed and stuttering buffoon, a sly and extravagant grotesque. The mask of the *ksatria* served to neutralize expression; that of the clown, so suggestive of a caricature or a scare-crow, heightens it to the last degree. The former was a *high* dance, this is a *low* one; Semar bends his knees extravagantly, leans his hands on them, and diddles his head. The *dalang* informs us that this mythic Rigoletto is convulsed with mirth, as he mocks at the great and rails at their foibles and vices. Comic expression here reaches the limits permitted by the "noble and courtly" style and the intangible conventions of an ancient art.

THE Unnamed Society of Manchester, England, is to produce Thomas Hardy's epic drama, *The Dynasts,* in January 1931, a great undertaking, to be preceded by George Moore's *The Making of an Immortal*; Gordon Bottomley's *Towie Castle* and Clifford Bax's *The Poetasters of Ispahan.*

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Joan Temple's *Charles and Mary,* a study of the Lambs, "praised by London critics, but neglected by London playgoers" is on the program of the Rusholme Repertory Players at Manchester, England.

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The Goodman Theatre repertory for the season 1930-31 has been definitely set. Following *The Firebrand* will come Philip Barry's *Hotel Universe*; then at four week intervals, Julian Thompson's *The Nightingale,* Tchekov's *The Sea Gull*; Laila Taylor's *Echo*; Donald Ogden Stewart's *Rebound*; George du Maurier's *Peter Ibbetson* and one to be selected from the following: Sheridan's *A Trip to Scarborough*; Bracco's *El Piccolo Santo*; and *Ann Pedersdotter* by Jennssen and Masefield. Someone should pass on a hint to the directors that Maria Ouspenskaya might with great advantage be invited, as guest artist, to play the part of the witch, of which she gave such a memorable performance in the New York production with Alice Brady.

The Stockport Garrick Society has, as the fifth entry on its season's schedule, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* of Thomas Dekker, a far too little known contemporary of Shakespeare, adding that play to a list which includes *The Last Enemy,* by Frank Harvey, Granville-Barker's translation of the Quintero Brothers' *A Hundred Years Old* (which Otis Skinner played here last year), Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Sidney Howard's *The Silver Cord*—a satisfying program. But even that is supplemented by two further productions to be performed only three nights each and to be used for experimental work in stage design, costume, and acting with a special emphasis on the avoidance of casting to type among the players. The two plays chosen for this experimental purpose are Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and *The Rumour* by C. K. Munro. The announcement says, "It is without design, but not without significance, that the emotional episode of the war-stricken women of Troy should be followed, in the second experimental production, by a modern anti-war propagandist play. No two plays could be more dissimilar while having what is perhaps essentially the same inspiration."

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The Beaumont Little Theatre of Beaumont, Texas has opened the season in a new playhouse especially built for its activities.

THE ICELANDIC MILLENNIAL

Travelers from many nations joined with all Iceland last summer in celebrating the thousandth year of the Icelandic Parliament. The Procession to the Law Rock, where the King of Denmark announced The Althing's resumption of activities was a most impressive spectacle. The program of the festival was presented on the Ancient Plain of Thingvellir, June twenty-sixth, seventh and eighth.

THE ICELANDIC MILLENNIAL

A pageant depicting the election of The Law-Speaker at Althing in the year nine hundred and thirty was one of the outstanding features of Iceland's unique millennial celebration. It was under the direction of Haraldur Bjornsson.

THE TRIBUTARY THEATRE

The Altrincham Garrick Society deserves congratulations on its announcement that the plans for a new Little Theatre have been passed by the building committee. The house will be the first theatre solely for Little Theatre purposes to be built in England, all the others having been remade from old playhouses, or readjusted from structures not built as theatres.

Program Signet, Goodman Theatre, Chicago

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The Pasadena Community Playhouse spices its monthly program with three kinds of revivals—a successful comedy of twenty years ago, *Poor Little Rich Girl* by Eleanor Gates; a "smash hit" of the last generation, *Shore Acres*, by James A. Herne; and one of the world's greatest melodramas, *Othello*, by one William Shakespeare.

●

In the less than twenty years since the first university school of the drama was organized there have grown up more than a hundred university departments specializing either in all of the arts of the theatre or in some of them. One of this hundred, Syracuse University, where students may major in drama, or, to quote the catalogue, "where the student has at his command a university education leading to a degree, and in addition, all the advantages of a non-academic dramatic school", gives the following schedule of courses which a student may pursue and the hours of study required:

First Year

	1st sem. Hrs.	2nd sem. Hrs.
Philosophy I (Contemporary Culture)	3	3
Public Speaking (Essentials)	3	3
Freshman English	3	3
Physical Education	0	0
Literary Interpretation	2	2
Foreign Language	3	3
Hygiene	1	1

Second Year

	1st sem. Hrs.	2nd sem. Hrs.
Survey of English Literature	3	3
Aesthetics	3	3
Literary Interpretation	2	2
Physical Education	0	0
Debate	2	2
History of Western Europe	3	3
Psychology or Speech Science	3	3

Third Year

	1st sem. Hrs.	2nd sem. Hrs.
Stagecraft	2	2
Literary Interpretation	3	3
Design	1	0
Costuming	0	1
History of Fine Arts	1	1
Shakespeare	3	3
Modern Drama	3	3
Elective	3	3

Fourth Year

	1st sem. Hrs.	2nd sem. Hrs.
Play Production	2	2
Pageantry	1	1
Play Construction	2	2
Literary Interpretation	2	2
History of Music	3	3
Elizabethan Drama	3	3
English Drama (1660-1890)	3	0
Greek Drama	0	3

Courses are also given which have for their special purpose the training of teachers, broadcasters and professional readers.

The Drama Department of the Carnegie Institute of Technology began its season with the first revival of a play that should not have been allowed to lapse so long—*Swords,* Sidney Howard's first play in which, in 1921, Clare Eames appeared, under Brock Pemberton's direction, in a production (designed by Robert Edmond Jones) not often surpassed in beauty.

●

Waterbury, Connecticut, is a manufacturing town with a population of 117,000, a large part of whom are foreign-born factory workers. The Little Theatre of Waterbury, Helen Schoeni, director, is developing a monthly project of international one-act plays by distinguished foreign playwrights, the plays done in English with casts entirely of the playwrights' own nationality. In their prospectus is this quotation from Herbert Hoover:

"This civilization is not going to depend so much on what we do when we work as on what we do in our time off. We are organizing the production of leisure. We need better organization for its consumption."

●

While the League of New York Theatres is trying to find some solution to the problem of ticket sales, the Seattle Repertory Playhouse has in working order a service for direct delivery of tickets to its patrons through the Postal Telegraph Company. Under the arrangement, patrons telephone the Playhouse to reserve seats which, with a ten cent charge for delivery (whether there is one ticket or a dozen) are taken to their own door by a uniformed messenger who collects either the cash payment or, in case of a season subscriber, a season ticket stub. A considerable part of the Playhouse audience is made up of regular subscribers, a condition which most professional playhouses would welcome as an aid to solving many of their problems.

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The Kellett Players, St. Paul, Minnesota, will produce this year *The Silver Cord* by Sidney Howard; *Enter Madame* by Gilda Varesi and Dolly Byrne; *The Sea Gull* or *The Three Sisters* by Tchekov; *Right You Are* by Luigi Pirandello; *Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw; and *The Toy Cart,* adapted from the Hindu by Arthur Symons, which is described as "a play so old that it seems futuristic".

●

Puppetry is the name of a Year Book to contain news of all puppet plays produced in England and America during the year, reviews of new puppet books and magazine articles, special records of Marionette exhibitions in museums, and photographs and drawings of new and famous historical marionettes. The editors are Paul McPharlin, Garrett Becker, Perry Dilley, James J. Hayes and Helen Haiman Joseph.

Is Athens Greece?

I have read the November THEATRE ARTS from cover to cover and found much entertainment and stimulation in it. Even the book reviews, usually so unanswerable, proved food for thought—and argument. In her review of *The Greek Way,* by Edith Hamilton, Naomi Mitchison threw out one or two suggestions which stirred me to an investigation on my own account. "I wonder," remarks Mrs. Mitchison, "whether Miss Hamilton knows Browning's translation of the *Agamemnon*, which, apart from a few annoying mannerisms, is amazingly good?" I have, personally, no doubt that Miss Hamilton does know her Browning, as *The Greek Way* bears witness to her familiarity with the world's great literature. But as I myself did not remember his *Agamemnon*, I turned eagerly to its pages to compare Miss Hamilton's rendering with a great poet's version of that magnificent passage, where Clytemnestra, having killed her lord, stands forth before the people and proclaims her deed.

Here is the passage in Miss Hamilton's own almost literal translation:

I stand here where I struck. So did I.
Nothing do I deny. I flung around him
a cloak, full folds, deadly folds. I caught
him,
fish in a net. No way to fly or fight.
Twice did I strike him and he cried out
twice
and his limbs failed him and he fell. Then
—then
I gave him the third stroke—
So there he lay and as he gasped, his blood
spouted and splashed me with black spray—
a dew
of death, sweet to me as heaven's sweet rain-
drops
When the cornland buds . . .

Which Browning renders thus:

I stand where I have struck, things once ac-
complished:
And so have done—and this deny I shall
not,—
As that his fate was nor to fly nor ward off.
A wrap-round with no outlet, as for fishes,
I fence about him—the rich woe of the
garment:
I strike him twice, and in a double "Ah
me!"
He let his limbs go—*there!* And to him
fallen,
The third blow add I, giving—of Below-
ground
Zeno, guardian of the dead—the votive
favor.
Thus in the mind of him he rages, falling,
And blowing forth a brisk blood-spatter,
strikes me
With the dark drop of slaughterous dew,—
rejoicing
No less than, at the god-given dewy-com-
fort,
The sown-stuff in its birth-throes from the
calyx.

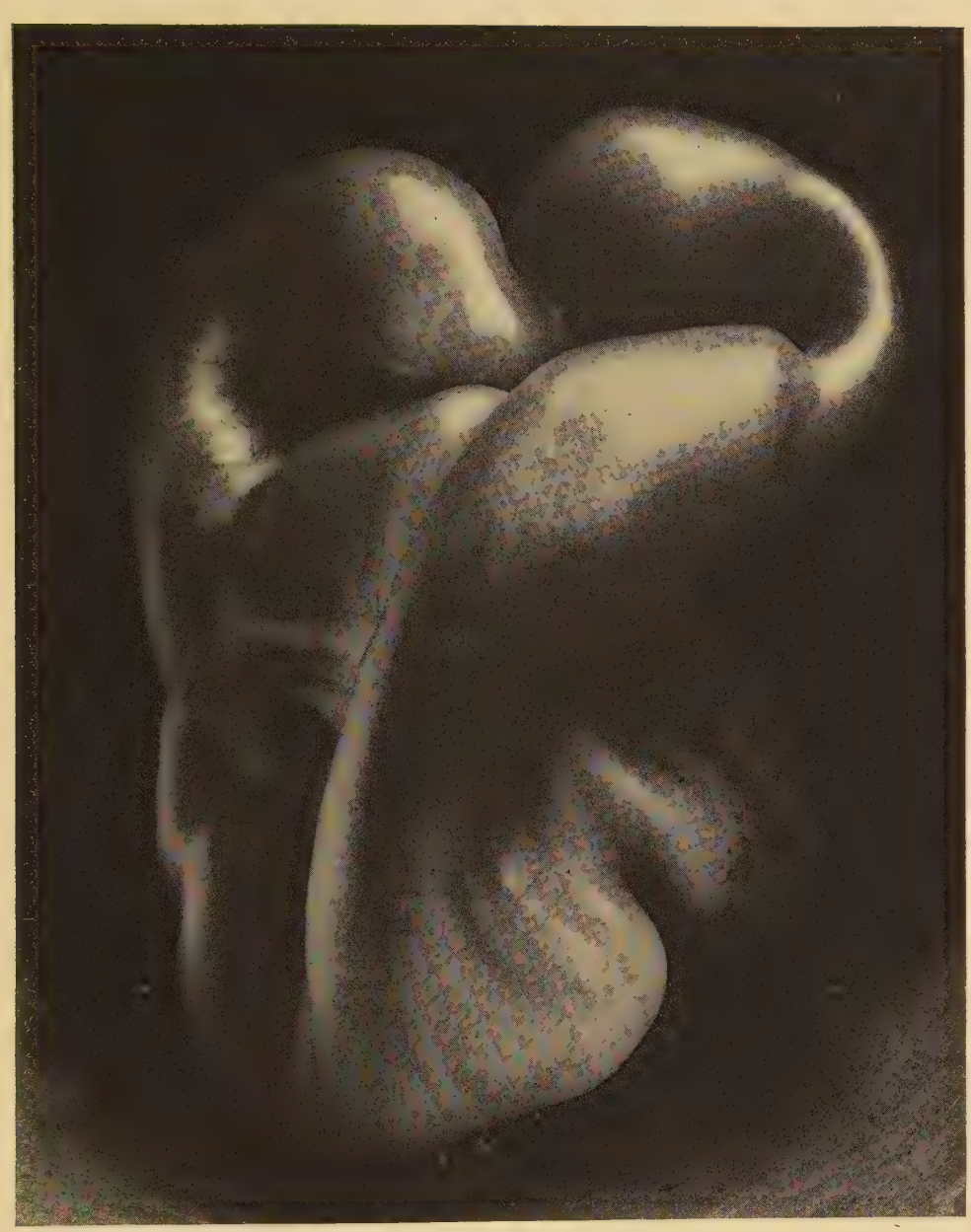
The general effect is a matter of taste,

of course, but, to me, the first quotation is nearer that austerity, force and grave simplicity which is the very essence of Greek literature. Quotations could be multiplied without end, but it is simpler, as Naomi Michison suggests, to read Browning—and then *The Greek Way* to find out what it was really all about.

Mrs. Mitchison takes exception to the fact that "when Miss Hamilton says Greece she means almost exclusively Athens". An attitude which Mrs. Mitchison finds "disconcerting" but which certainly has high authority. "Of all the Greeks," says Herodotus, "the Athenians are accounted first." "Poets, scientists, moral teachers, hardy speculators all found their center of life in Athens—the School of Hellas," says Gilbert Murray: "Athens represents Hellenism." And, again, Livingston in *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning For Us*: "When we speak of Greeks we shall have in mind primarily the thinkers and writers of Athens." Whatever Sparta and the other Greek states may have contributed to Greek culture, it is what happened in Athens, that "little center of white-hot spiritual energy" which affects us today.

Miss Hamilton has so obviously confined herself to a discussion of the actual remains of the Golden Age of Greece, the sculpture, architecture and literature which is undisputably authentic, that it hardly seems necessary to wonder, as Mrs. Mitchison does, why she did not go into the moot question of "origins". Mrs. Mitchison speaks with disapproval of the fact that Miss Hamilton does not discuss "the profoundly religious beginnings of drama in the harvest-play". The ritual of re-birth, the spring-ritual or ritual of Dionysus to which, I take it, Mrs. Mitchison refers, is one of the most fascinating, but also one of the most controversial subjects of research. Possibly Miss Hamilton does not agree with Prof. Murray's, Mr. Cornford's and Miss Harrison's theories. She may find more wisdom, if less charm in Prof. Pickard-Cambridge, who after a careful and scholarly weighing of evidence comes to the conclusion that "It . . . seems probable that this supposed ritual never existed in Greece at all". So widely do the doctors disagree! No one, however, can disagree about the power and beauty of Greek tragedy especially when it is presented with the energy, the understanding and the lack of pedantry which are characteristic of *The Greek Way*.

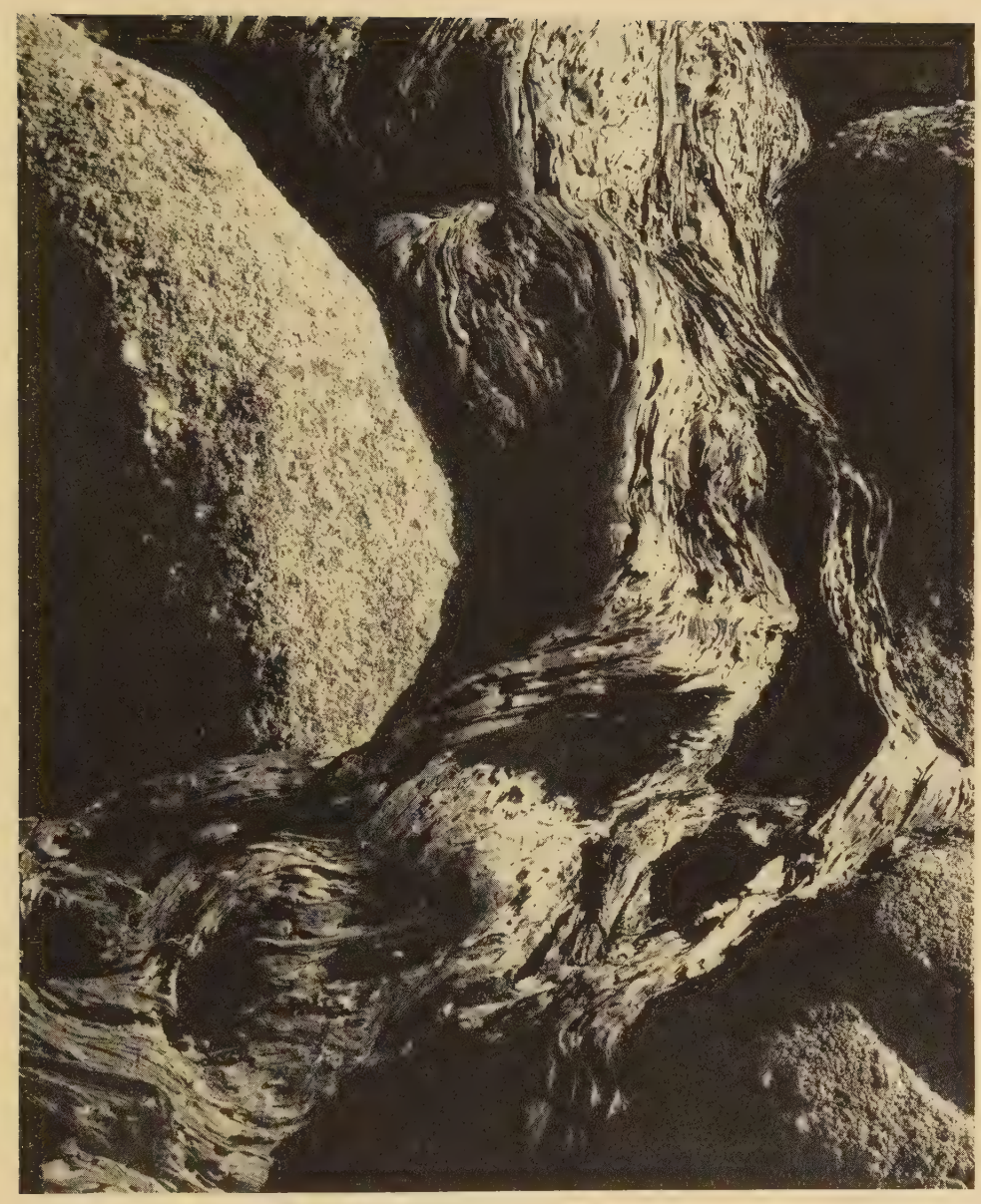
HELENA REDLIG



PEPPER

Edward Weston, California photographer, has made his camera a creative artistic medium. No painter of modern times is more cognizant of dramatic form. And like many another artist he finds his drama in the commonplace. The four photographs shown here are a part of Mr. Weston's exhibit at the Delphic Galleries, New York.

Egg Slicer



Cypress—Point Lobos

BONES

A Shoe-maker's Plays

Seven Shrovetide Plays, Translated and Adapted from the German of Hans Sachs, by E. U. Ouless. H. F. W. Deane & Sons, The Year Book Press Ltd.: London. 4s.

THE cobbler-playwright of fifteenth century Nuremburg has found a sympathetic interpreter and translator in the compiler of this little volume of seven short plays. Mr. Ouless has caught the simplicity and sweetness of the moralities, the rollicking humor of the picaresque farces. Whether he shows Eve washing the children while Adam makes the house ready for the visit of the Holy Messenger (God in the original, but censorship conditions in England being what they are neither *The Children of Eve* nor *The Green Pastures* may be seen there in their wicked originality), or the cunning of the unscrupulous wandering scholar, or the roguish tricks of the wife who has discovered her husband is merely shamming death to test her love, the reader feels the translator's genuine understanding of his work. His slight adaptations are quite in the spirit of the plays and serve admirably to finish them off for modern production. Mr. Ouless has apparently steeped himself in the tradition of these old plays and others like them which appeared in England at about the same time. The complaints of the *Five Poor Travelers* are distinctly reminiscent of the first speeches of the shepherds in *The Second Shepherd's Play* while Rob in *The Horse Thief* and the name character in *The Wandering Scholar* are easily recognizable in Mak the sheep stealer of *The Second Shepherd's Play*, and in Diccon of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.

There is an exquisite naiveté about these little dramas. They contain the fundamentals of play-making. Modern playwrights should be able to find lessons in them, particularly in the childish and glamorous quality of "Let's pretend" which in these days of cruel realism the theatre seems to have lost. They would make excellent puppet plays. Children will delight both to play and to hear them. And adults will like them not merely because of the story of the hearty Nuremburg shoemaker but because they arouse that kind of response that only simple fundamental things can effect.

CARL CARMER

Man and his Clothes

From Nudity to Raiment, An Introduction to the Study of Costume, by Hilaire Hiler. American distributors, E. Weyhe: New York. $10.00.

IN a foreword and five chapters, the author of this book tells what man has learned of the relationship between his early forebears and raiment. The chapters are entitled The Origin of Clothing, Prehistoric Dress, The Primitives, The Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, and Costumes in Mexico, Central America and Peru. They concentrate in one entertaining volume the gist of facts, theories, and opinions otherwise scattered through an extensive bibliography of many thousand volumes.

From William Gropper's circus novel in wood-cuts, Alay-Oop! *(Coward-McCann).*

Sources vary from the Bible to Havelock Ellis. Thomas Carlyle, Gottfried Semper, Saloman Reinach, and Elliot Smith are among the others quoted. Quite wisely, M. Hiler holds no briefs, not even for his own work, preferring merely to state what has been arrived at. As Mr. Sisley Huddleston points out in his preface (which, by the way, is an excellent criticism of the book from a layman's point of view): "The origin of clothing is complex. It is not to be explained by this theory or by that theory. Some of those who have devoted their time and attention to the subject have fallen into the error of dogmatically declaring that clothing arose from one or other of the various needs and aspirations of mankind. For my part, I protest; and though I discern in Hiler, as I read over the printer's sheets of his work, a certain penchant and preference for a theory, yet one of the greatest merits of his book is that, while keeping his statement clear and unconfused, he nevertheless sets out impartially all the main theories".

In this volume early man becomes a Robinson Crusoe seeking clothes from his environment; whether as protection or adornment is not certain. Whatever his motivation he has left many evidences of what he wore and from these M. Hiler has been able to recreate for us more of life and thought than one would have deemed possible. Being the possessor of one of the most comprehensive collections of early costumes and adornments in the world and at the same time an artist of recognized achievement, he speaks with authority.

But it is not merely for its scholarship and concentration that the book deserves praise. To the general reader it will prove fascinating reading, for the author has written in simple style and enlivened his text with amusing comment and anecdote. We discover for the first time that wigs were not uncommon among primitive peoples, that Bushmen sometimes ornament their beards with dogs' tails, that the Mexican women of Tehuantepec wear coiffures representing the frock of a baby rescued long ago from a wreck on the coast, an adornment worn like a huge bonnet with the sleeves hanging down behind.

The book is profusely illustrated, handsomely bound in red board, printed in large type on over-size sheets. It will prove invaluable to the student of man and costume, and a charming study for any library.

Typical Moderns

Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Third Series, Edited by Thomas H. Dickinson. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston. $5.00.

FOR the third time Mr. Dickinson has selected from the theatres of the world a collection of plays, "presented because they seem to the editor best to combine

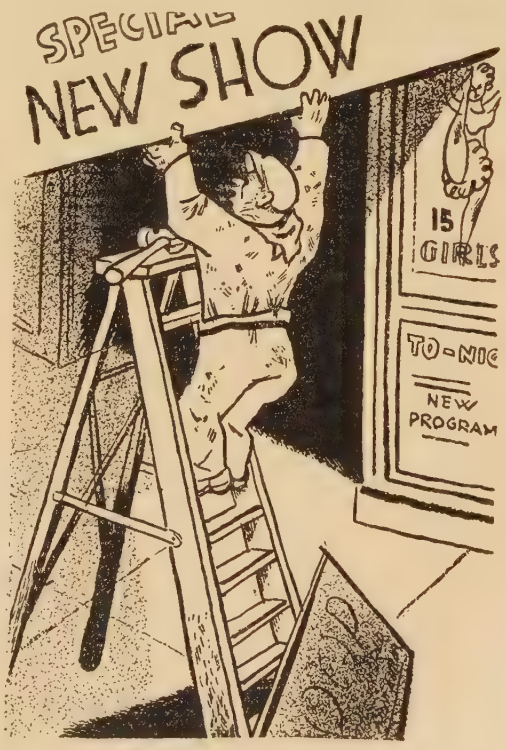
merit in themselves and representative character in a group". While it would be easy to quarrel with any editor over his selection of such a group, it will be generally agreed that Mr. Dickinson has made an interesting and significant anthology. More than his two preceding volumes, it reveals the tendencies of contemporary dramatic thought. No one book could well express these, however, in their true perspective. The selection of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom*, and Sidney Howard's *The Silver Cord* as America's contribution is a case in point. These plays may be typical but they do not give a true conception of the American dramatic scene. Nor will the one English play, A. A. Milne's *The Dover Road* be an index to that state of the English mind that produced *Journey's End* or *The Man With a Load of Mischief*. This the editor readily admits, stating that "No attempt has been made to represent the various national dramas of Europe and America". "The purpose has been" he says, "to present a typical picture of the drama of western civilization as this manifests itself in various national centres."

Mr. Dickinson draws no very definite conclusions from his work as an editor. He deplores the "comparative decline" in the British theatre and the fact that Shaw has no followers. French drama has paralleled the British in its decline. Of America he has more hope. It has in its best work "cut entirely the bonds that tied it alike to the mother country and to the continent". But the new American dramatists "have naturally paid the price of experiment. . . . One could mention a dozen plays written in America in as many years in which the objective has been beyond the powers of the dramatist".

The great war, according to Mr. Dickinson, was responsible for the end of the old drama and the beginning of the new. He does not go into detail as to the characteristics of the latter but among the types that have disappeared he lists problem plays as such, comedies of manners, romantic plays. He adds that "There are no villains, heroes, raisonneurs, courtship scenes, seductions, confession or repentance scenes".

Among the twenty plays of the collection are dramas so well known to American audiences as S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk*, Ferenc Molnar's *Liliom*, Leonid Andreyev's *He Who Gets Slapped*, Charles Vildrac's *The Steamship Tenacity*, and Karel Capek's *R. U. R.*; and among the other authors are Johann Sigurjónsson, Sem Benelli, Luigi Pirandello, Frank Wedekind, Sean O'Casey, H. R. Lenormand, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, Georg Kaiser, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Serafín and Joaquin Alvarez Quintero, and Nikolai Yevreinov.

This list affords the ready conclusion that



Another of William Gropper's wood-cuts, from Alay-Oop!

the book will follow its predecessors into the libraries and classrooms of our colleges and will also provide for the general reader an admirably compiled anthology of the plays of today.

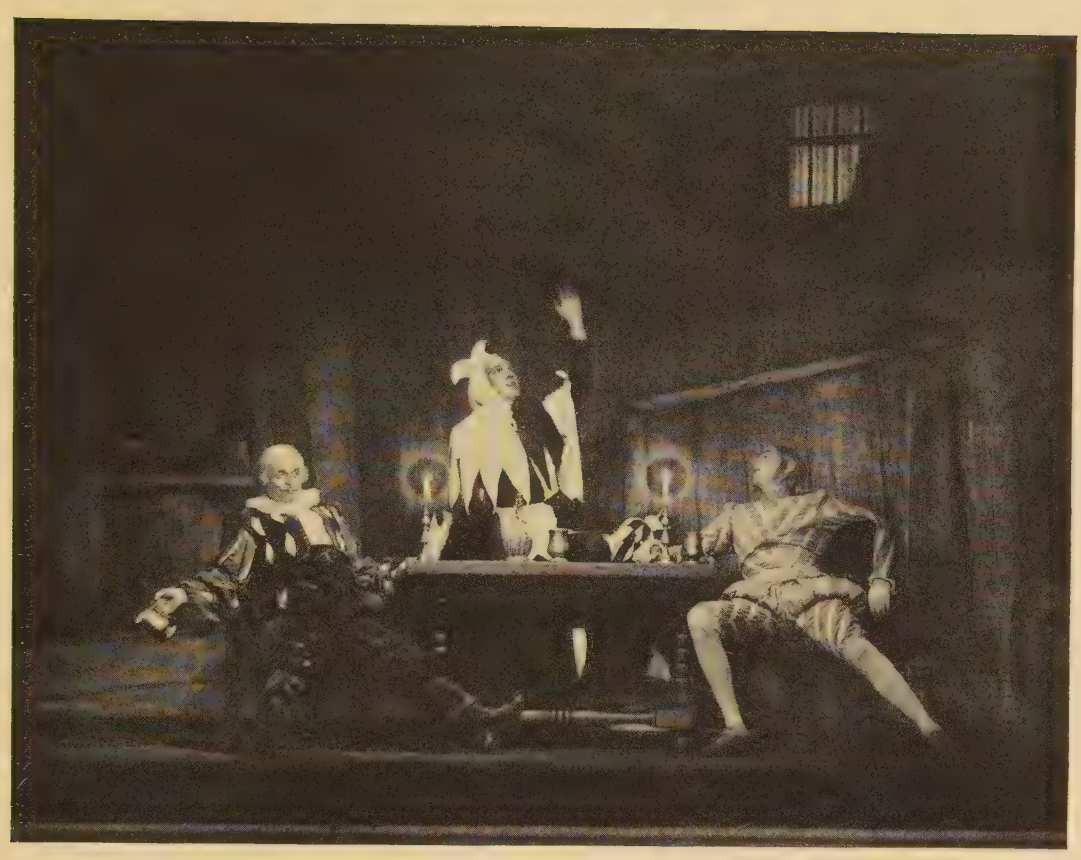
A Transitional Period

Early Seventeenth Century Plays, 1600-1642, edited by Harold Reinoehl Walley and John Harold Wilson. Harcourt, Brace: New York: $3.50.

EVERY collection which makes conveniently available the less familiar treasures of English dramatic literature is a welcome addition to the theatre lovers library, especially when it is presented in the scholarly and workman-like manner with which these early seventeenth century plays have been edited. Concentrating on the years between 1600 and 1642, that is from the beginning of the century to the closing of the theatres under the Commonwealth, the editors have made an interesting selection from the works of fourteen leading playwrights. The period bridges the chasm between the more familiar Elizabethan drama and the Restoration plays and therefore presents material of great importance in the study of the development of dramaturgy.

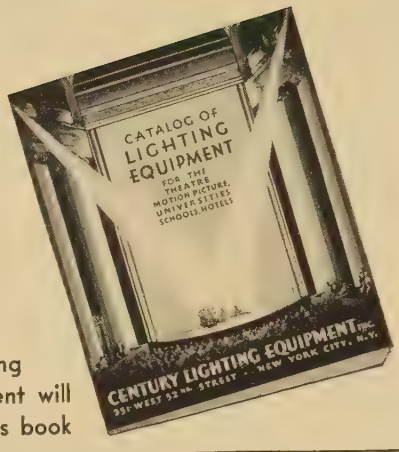
It is interesting to follow in these plays the steps by which the focus of dramatic emphasis is shifted from the remote, the poetic and the strange to that which is close at hand and familiar. The editors have stressed this point in their selection, purposely omitting historical and chronicle plays and illustrating their argument with comedies such as Dekker and Middleton's *Honest Whore* which, though the scene is laid in Milan, directly reflects English manners, John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* and Middleton's hilarious and bawdy *Chaste Maid of Cheapside*, a vivid picture of the contemporary London scene.

Tragedy is, of course, at this time, almost exclusively an affair of blood and thunder. *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois,* by George Chapman, departs a little from the formula by being of a more philosophic temper, but John Webster's *The White Devil* is a masterly example of the type of Italianate tragedy in its most acute form. Tragic-comedy is excellently represented by Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* while in D'Avenant's *Love and Honor* we can study the predecessor of the long line of heroic plays for which the Restoration is famous. The other plays in the collection are Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, with its realistic presentation of middle class sorrows, Chapman, Jonson and Marston's *Eastward Ho!*, Jonson's *Volpone or The Fox*, Fletcher's *The Wild-Goose Chase*, Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts, A Mad Couple Well Matched* by Richard Brome and finally *The Cardinal* by that last of the late Elizabethans, James Shirley. A scholarly introduction, with brief notices of each playwright and careful selection of texts with a minimum of notes and comments, add materially to the value of this collection which fills an important niche in the student's library of dramatic literature.



TWELFTH NIGHT

A scene from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, revived this season with Jane Cowl as Viola and Leon Quartermaine as Malvolio. The photograph shows Walter Kingsford as Sir Toby Belch; Lewis Martin as Feste, the clown; and Arthur Hohl as Sir Andrew Aguecheek. The setting, designed by Raymond Sovey, affords an opportunity for comparison with Max Reinhardt's use of a similar tap-room scene pictured on page 988 of the November issue. (*Photograph by Vandamm*)



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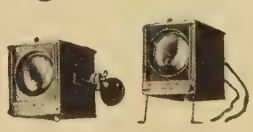

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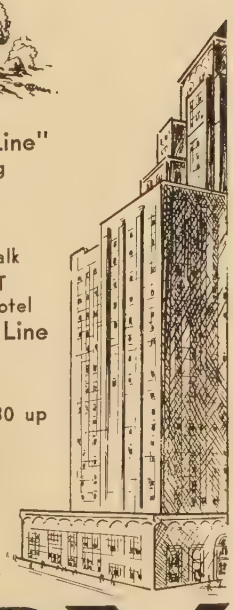

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